

Transportation

Existing Conditions

Crofton, located away from navigable waters and rail lines, experienced very little growth until the early 1960's. In fact, the name Crofton was not used for the area before that time. However, because of its location, the advent of the automotive era, and a well developed highway network, what was once a secluded area, has been made easily accessible to and from several major job markets. This has encouraged substantial growth, and the accompanied congestion associated with that growth.

Major roadways predate Crofton, and form the skeleton upon which the local road network has been constructed. Over time, development of the area has continued, congestion has become a major area of concern. MD 3 is the primary focus of this concern, and has been the subject of detailed studies.

Roads in the County are divided into five road classifications that reflect the functional elements of the network. These classifications are Local Roads, Collectors, Arterials (Principal and Minor), and Freeways (Refer to Map 8). The southern boundary of the Crofton Small Area is formed by U.S. 50/301 and is the only Freeway serving this area. The following is a list of the Arterials and Collectors in the Crofton Small Area identified on the 1997 GDP map:

Principal Arterials

MD Route 3 (Crain Highway)

Minor Arterials

MD 424 (Davidsonville Road)

MD 450 (Defense Highway)

Johns Hopkins Road (west of Riedel Road)

Riedel Road

Collector Roads

Aberdeen Drive

Bell Branch Road

Chapman Road

Chelmsford Drive

Clubhouse Gate

Crawford Boulevard

Crofton Parkway

Cronson Boulevard

Duke of Kent Drive

Fallsway Drive

Farnborn Street

Farrell Street

Good Hope Drive

Huntwood Road

Johns Hopkins Road (east
of Riedel)

Layton Street

Mount Tabor Road

Rosback Road

Rutland Road

Patuxent River Road

Saint Stephens Church

Road

Tilghman Drive

Underwood Road

Urby Drive

Assets and Issues

The Crofton Small Area has many transportation related assets. These include a well developed sidewalk system, the scenic beauty of rural roadways, and the proximity to both Washington and Baltimore.

There are also several transportation related issues of concern for the Crofton Small Area.

Flooding on MD 450 (Defense Highway)

During periods of substantial rainfall, large sections of MD 450 experience sustained flooding conditions. Since MD 450 is such a vital link in the local transportation network, maintenance of the facility as a reliable travel route is vital for the well being of the community. The Maryland State Highway Administration is aware of the situation and is looking into ways to correct the flooding problem.

Need to protect scenic and historic roads

Anne Arundel County, and specifically the Crofton Small Area, has roadways that are uniquely beautiful, and efforts to preserve their character are necessary. To that end, the Anne Arundel County Council has passed a resolution to establish a scenic and historic road program. While this program has not yet been established, the need is recognized.

Incomplete pedestrian and bicycle networks

While the Crofton Small Area has a well developed pedestrian/sidewalk system, on an individual subdivision level, there is very little connectivity, and a lesser developed bicycle network. There is interest to coordinate effort and to enhance the existing system.

Lack of public transit

Currently, only one transit route serves the Crofton area. This route provides service from Crofton to the New Carrollton Metro Station. There is a need for additional transit lines, and a localized transit system.

Goals and Recommendations

The Crofton Small Area Plan seeks to provide a balanced relationship between land development and the provision of adequate transportation facilities needed to accommodate that growth. Therefore, recommendations have been developed which rely on a combination of timely highway upgradings and reconstruction, new interchanges, an improved public bus system, an integrated trail system, and innovative funding mechanisms.

Traffic Circulation

Goal 1. Reduce existing traffic congestion, improve existing circulation deficiencies, decrease accidents, and develop a reasonable transportation system with sufficient capacity to accommodate additional traffic generated by future land development.

Recommendations:

- Reconstruct MD 450 from Baldwin Avenue to Staples Corner to provide improved vertical sight distance, reducing the accident potential. Add wider shoulders to accommodate bypassing vehicles and mature bicyclists and provide continuous sidewalk on the north side.
- East of Crofton, the scenic and historic road designation for MD 450 should preserve the rural character of the road, allowing only spot safety or rehabilitation improvements (for example to improve the chronic flooding problem).
- Straighten current blind S-curve on Underwood Road by the Cardinal Field entrance and Mt. Tabor Road (scheduled for construction).
- On Underwood Road, provide a safer horizontal alignment and wider shoulders for bypassing traffic and bicyclists between MD 424 and Johns Hopkins Road. Included would be a continuous sidewalk (along developed properties) and a separated path (along undeveloped properties) from the Secondary School Complex to the northern limit of developed properties.
- Construct a three lane, 40' wide urban section extension of Riedel Road from its current terminus to MD 3, opposite Waugh Chapel Road.
- Construct a four lane, 52' urban section extension of Cronson Boulevard from its current terminus to Conway Road, at a point approximately 1/4 mile west of MD 3 as part of a roadway called Professional Boulevard.

Goal 2. Facilitate the safe and orderly movement of both local and through traffic by minimizing conflicts, where possible, between types of traffic trips and by reducing through traffic on local or collector roadways.

Recommendations:

- Encourage the State Highway Administration to accommodate long term growth in regional travel on John Hanson Highway (US 50/301) and Interstate 97, reserving Crain Highway (MD 3) as a local route for the residents of the Crofton, Crownsville and Odenton Small Areas.
- Provide signage (from State Highway Administration) designating MD 3 for local traffic only.

Goal 3. Plan roads or improvements providing efficient access to residential, commercial and employment areas, while minimizing dislocation and disruption resulting from the construction of such roads or improvements.

Recommendations:

- Align zoning and transportation policies in the Staples Corner area to promote attractive, community oriented activities and uses.
- Improve the intersection at Staples Corner (MD 450 and MD 424). Study the possibility of a multi-lane roundabout which would relieve the congestion, as well as provide a more aesthetic entrance to the Crofton Triangle from the rural areas and provide a safer pedestrian environment.
- Connect the commercial areas on the east and west sides of MD 3 with a bridge to allow vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian traffic to move easily between the two areas.

Goal 4. Maintain, where possible, the design capacity and traffic flow efficiency of planned highways by controlling access, providing adequate rights-of-way, and discouraging high traffic generating development with immediate access adjacent to intersections and/or interchanges.

Goal 5. Reduce vehicle miles driven, fuel consumption, traffic overload, excessive noise, air pollution, and other environmental deficiencies resulting from an inefficient circulation and transportation system.

Recommendations:

- Reserve option for a western bypass by preserving the right of way for the State Highway Administration's selected alignment and minimize or restrict new private, direct access to MD 3.
- Apply the Boulevard Concept to MD 3 (proposed by the Route 3 Task Force) and take aggressive access management measures through the development approval process, to minimize, or in some cases reduce, the number of private driveway access points with MD 3.
- Reduce the turning radius of the right-turn movement from northbound MD 3 to MD 450 to reduce the speed of vehicles making that maneuver and to improve safety for vehicles exiting onto MD 450 from Patuxent River Road.

Public Transit

Goal 6. Encourage a bus transit system, including public parking facilities, which provides efficient and comfortable service to supplement the private automobile, conserves energy, and improves air quality.

Recommendations:

- Improve accessibility to the express bus to New Carrollton by adding additional stops in the Crofton Small Area. Proposed stops include adding a Park and Ride lot west of MD 3 and north of MD 450, Riedel Road at the proposed Crofton Library, the Crofton Mews Apartments, and possibly the Village of Waugh Chapel.
- Begin rush hour express service to the Baltimore region by providing service between the Crofton Small Area and the Cromwell Light Rail Station.
- Provide local County or private bus service using reduced size, gasoline or natural gas fueled busses. Proposed routes should loop between the Crofton Parkway, MD 3 commercial centers and the Village of Waugh Chapel using Riedel Road. Interconnection with the Parole/Annapolis area is an additional option.

Non-Vehicular Transportation

Goal 7. Develop and recommend non-vehicular facilities, including pedestrian/hiker trails, bicycle ways and equestrian paths which may link residential areas to each other and to commercial retail facilities, employment centers, recreational areas, and other transportation facilities.

Recommendations:

- Construct wherever possible, non-vehicular access-ways to connect communities to other communities and to recreational and commercial areas.
- Recommend that all new land subdivisions provide connectivity to/from other subdivisions to minimize pedestrian and vehicular travel distances.
- Remove obstacles to pedestrians and young bikers by retrofitting ADA (The Americans with Disabilities Act, 1990) standard ramps at intersections for all roadways of primary residential function or higher, and provide missing sidewalks in commercial districts adjacent to residential areas (e.g. MD 450 at Priest Bridge, MD 450/424 at Staples Corner, and MD 424 at MD 3 commercial area).
- Widen the shoulders of MD 450 for safer pedestrian and bicycle travel, provide sidewalks on both sides through commercial section, and along north side between MD 424 and MD 3.
- Reconstruct MD 424 into a narrower and slower speed community spine, including a pedestrian/bicycle path and linear/greenway park from MD 3 to Bell Branch Park to support existing uses and future commercial, institutional, community and park uses.
- Create a trail along the east side of the Little Patuxent River including connections to the commercial areas along MD 3, the MD 424/Conway Road linear park trail, the lake behind the Post Office and the park in the northwest quadrant of MD 3/ MD 424.
- Construct a bridge and connecting roadway between Crofton Parkway and the commercial center on the west side of MD 3 at a location immediately north of the Village Green. This would promote foot traffic near the Village Green as well as

the Patuxent riverfront area. In conjunction with the bridge, have Crawford Boulevard only access northbound MD 3.

- Create a pedestrian/bicycle trail from MD 450 to Waugh Chapel Road along the eastern side of MD 3, separated from the roadway.
- Provide access to the Little Patuxent riverfront area by creating a trail along the Little Patuxent in cooperation with property owners on the west side of MD 3 from the Anne Arundel County line to Conway Road.
- Locate and develop a pedestrian connection between Bell Branch Park to MD 450 and across to the sidewalk system north of MD 450 at or near Mayfair Place.
- Create pathway connections to the park property located west of MD 3 and north of Conway Road from the MD 424/Conway Road and MD 3 trails.
- Work with property owners to create direct pedestrian access to and between business entrances and properties, as well as appropriate connections between commercial services abutting residential areas.
- Provide pedestrian/ bicycle connections to the schools. Work with the Anne Arundel County School Board, private property owners, developers, the State Highway Administration, and the County to create safe intersection crossings and more direct routes to the Crofton Small Area's schools to provide safe and convenient access to classes and school activities. Important links would include: a path from Chelmsford to Tilghman through the Crofton Meadows Elementary School property, a path from the Sweet Fern area through the park to the Middle School and future High School, a path from Chapman Road to Hayman Lane to allow more direct access to the Crofton Elementary School, and a path from Trent Road near Tipton Drive to the Crofton Woods Elementary School.

Implementation Strategies

- Early planning, dedication and acquisition of rights-of-way for future needs.
- Innovative financing methods which rely to a greater extent on developer contributions for funding transportation improvements (in addition to the traditional funding of improvements through general revenue funds).
- Maintaining development levels to what can be supported by transportation facilities that are programmed in the near future.
- Establish a mobility zoning overlay for all future Crofton development requiring public and private land development projects to undertake cooperative planning for street and pedestrian connects (except in rural areas or areas more than one mile from a planned school or commercial area).
- Develop a strategic plan for retrofitting paths, sidewalks, bicycle trails and bicycle lanes into existing areas with a phased implementation program taking advantage of available federal and state funds.

Design Guidelines

- Ultimate rights-of-way should be acquired and/or protected in order to provide for incremental extension or expansion of planned transportation facilities as demand warrants, and at reasonable costs, with minimum property displacement.
- Properties adjacent to US 50 and MD 3 should be required, at the time of subdivision or building permit approval, to preserve existing vegetation and/or to have a landscape/buffering plan approved. Such plans should provide appropriate noise and visual mitigation measures to reduce the impact of these new or improved transportation facilities on future development. Further, these landscaping/buffering plans should be implemented upon approval so that vegetation will be mature by the time the facility is constructed. These areas will remain as permanent, undisturbed buffer areas.
- Occupants of new developments adjoining highways should be protected from visual intrusion by the use of reverse frontage, setbacks, landscaping and fencing, as required by County ordinances, and should be protected from the negative impacts of noise and air pollution to the degree that is legally possible.
- The design and construction of transportation facilities should be such that the aesthetic and recreational values of adjoining parkland are retained and enhanced to the maximum extent feasible.
- MD 450, MD 424 and Underwood Road should be designed to preserve their scenic qualities. Efforts to minimize access points, preserve existing natural vegetation/buffering, and provide landscaped monumental entrances to internal subdivision streets should be demonstrated at the time of development review.
- All highways should be designed to minimize their physical impact on the natural environment.
- Properly designed street networks should be provided to facilitate desired traffic flow and continuity. Residential streets should be designed to discourage through traffic. Points of ingress and egress should be minimized on arterial roads to avoid conflicts with through traffic flow while retaining adequate access to properties.
- Intersections should be designed and located to facilitate safe vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian movements.
- In providing highway alignments or establishing street patterns, consideration should be given to minimizing the creation of small, isolated parcels of land. In such cases where this is unavoidable, efforts should be made to incorporate the parcels into a creative aesthetic open space, either publicly or privately maintained.
- Freestanding signs advertising commercial activities adjacent to major thoroughfares should be discouraged and/or consolidated to the extent possible.