

Community Facilities

Existing Conditions

Crownsville is served by three public elementary schools on sites of 10-15 acres, which provide for neighborhood ballfields. There are two other properties operated by the Board of Education; a Student Service Center and equipment repair facility on a 5.5 acre site located in an older converted school building on Millersville Road near Route 3, and the Arlington Echo campground and special education facility on the upper Severn River. These sites provide for countywide program and administrative support services. The Winterode Building within the State Hospital grounds has been renovated for use as an Alternative High School, also operated by the Board of Education.

There is only one fire station located in Crownsville, but parts of the area are covered by stations in Crofton and Annapolis. The Herald Harbor Volunteer Fire Company serves most of the Generals Highway corridor and communities along the Severn River. There is a Post Office centrally located along Generals Highway. There is currently no branch library or senior center in the area. The nearest facilities are in Crofton, Odenton, or Annapolis. The Crownsville Area is under consideration for a future police station, but is currently served by the Western District based in Odenton along MD 170 near Route 32.

Quasi-public facilities exist in several communities, such as Baldwin Hall which provides meeting space and banquet facilities, as well as a local theater. There is a small neighborhood center in Herald Harbor and a larger Clubhouse facility in Sherwood Forest, serving those communities. Several churches provide space for various activities throughout the area.

Major recreational facilities in the area include the Eisenhower Golf Course and the Generals Highway Corridor Park. The Arden Park also provides additional ballfields for league use, and there is a neighborhood park (along Sunrise Beach Rd). The Severn Run Natural Environmental Area and Bacon Ridge park preserve over 550 acres, intended for passive recreation, along with an additional 550 acres of the State Hospital property to be transferred to the Department of Natural Resources. A unique 50 acre waterfront site has recently been acquired by the County along the Severn River at Brewers Pond, as part of the "Green Cathedral." The Annapolis Waterworks property is to be developed for limited recreational use, with trails accessible from Housely Road in Parole.

Assets and Issues

Despite its 22 miles of shoreline along the Severn River and its tributaries, Crownsville has very limited public access to the water. Various waterfront subdivisions have their own community marinas and launch ramps, but the inland population must depend on a single commercial marina, Smith's Boatyard on Little Round Bay. The need for public water access has

become a significant issue, as State or County properties along the river are restricted to passive use. The newly acquired Koenig site is an example of this, with high bluffs and abutting sensitive areas to be protected from any intensive use. Also, it is accessible only through private roads or easements.

The need for more ballfields has been addressed in this plan, particularly as an alternative to the expansion of Arden Park, which would have adverse environmental impact on the nearby sensitive area. Possible sites have been considered in the Generals Highway corridor, as well as properties abutting I-97 to the west. Local recreation needs must be balanced with requirements of softball and soccer leagues in the central county area.

Opportunities for biking and pedestrian access are also a major priority of this Plan. The proposed South Shore Trail is a key element which would link Annapolis to Odenton, while serving nearby communities in Crownsville. With connector paths and convenient parking for residents, the Trail could become a central spine for a pathway network throughout the community.

There are various types of activity centers serving the local population, including both the commercial and the social/recreational needs of the community. Local neighborhood facilities are provided in some of the older communities such as Herald Harbor and Sherwood Forest, which have a meeting hall or clubhouse available for group activities and recreational programs. Newer developments seldom provide building space for use by residents but may have local parks and marina facilities. Community-wide functions can be accommodated in the Volunteer Fire Station at Herald Harbor, the elementary schools, or Baldwin Hall.

Goals and Recommendations

Community Center Concept

The community has expressed a need for additional public services, and the Plan has identified two possible locations for grouping related facilities together on the same site. The idea of “co-location” of community services was suggested in the General Development Plan for libraries, recreation, and senior centers. An example of this approach exists in Edgewater where the new library and senior center are on contiguous sites with shared access and parking. A new post office is located next to this complex and land is reserved for a future police station.

In Crownsville, the State Hospital site offers the opportunity for “co-location” of community facilities through infill development or adaptive reuse of existing buildings. The Plan recommends that every effort should be made to locate community services (such as library, senior center, post office and ballparks) on the grounds of the Hospital. The rationale is given as follows:

Many community services, such as elder day care, are already being provided at this site. The addition of other community services at the same site provides the opportunity for public transportation links such as shuttle buses from the hospital grounds to Parole. In addition, the County would receive the benefit of avoiding land acquisition costs and, possibly in some cases, the use of existing buildings and structures with only the cost of any necessary renovations. In this era of competition for limited public tax dollars, more services can be provided to more people, by locating those services on property that is already publicly owned.

Another site envisioned in the Concept Plan for a cluster of community facilities is centrally located at the I-97 gateway to Crownsville. A complex on this site could include a fire station, to be relocated from Herald Harbor, police substation, and possibly a small branch library, senior services, recreation and access to the South Shore Trail, with extra parking and a ranger station. Analysis and alternatives for this site are covered in the Community Design chapter.

Parks and Recreation

As described above, the Crownsville area contains major park facilities for both active and passive recreation. Again the State Hospital Site has been identified as a major resource for meeting community needs. The Plan recommends transfer or reuse of certain areas of the property for environmental and habitat protection, as well as recreational purposes.

- The County and/or the Department of Natural Resources, Natural Heritage Division, should be encouraged to acquire portions of the Crownsville State Hospital property that are no longer needed by the state hospital system.
- Much of the western and southern portion of the hospital property contains environmentally sensitive areas and lies within the Bacon Ridge Branch corridor of the South River. The cohesive integrity of that corridor in its natural state is crucial to the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Resource Conservation Area located immediately to the south, at the confluence of the North River and the Bacon Ridge Branch. This Resource Conservation Area contains habitat for federally endangered species. That habitat is dependent upon the forested areas extending northward along the North River and the Bacon Ridge Branch. Accordingly, acquisition and preservation in its natural state of that portion of the hospital property adjoining the Bacon Ridge and its tributaries should be a major goal of the Department of Natural Resources, Natural Heritage Division and/or Anne Arundel County. Such an acquisition would supplement the park land owned by the County immediately to the south of the hospital property and the state park land located immediately to the north of the property. The acquisition would place, in permanently protected public ownership, land creating a greenway from the confluence of the North River and the Bacon Ridge Branch northward to the Bacon Ridge Natural Area north of the hospital.

- Acquire other areas of the hospital grounds, where the topography is appropriate for active recreation, by Anne Arundel County as park land. There are many areas, not currently in use by the state hospital system, that would be appropriate for ball fields or other outdoor recreational activities.
- Make every effort to maintain and expand the existing trail system for use for equestrians. Avoid introduction of trail uses (e.g. skateboards, etc.) that are incompatible with equestrian use.
- Involve members of the Crownsville SAP Committee on an advisory basis to evaluate opportunities at the state hospital and to work with the state regarding adaptive reuse of the property.

Trail System and Greenways

An extensive Greenways system is envisioned throughout the Crownsville area. It is an important element in the Small Area Plan.

- It is recommended that the County develop a greenways master plan for the Crownsville area that includes the identification of existing natural areas and a plan for connecting them to create a greenway, creation of additional greenways, designation of equestrian trails (separate from trails used by bikers and skate boarders, uses which are incompatible with the presence of horses), designation of hiker-biker trails, and designation of supplemental bike routes.
- The plan should include the designation of greenway corridors in the following locations:
 1. Along the North River,
 2. Along Bacon Ridge Branch,
 3. Along Route 450 from Crownsville Road westward to Staples Corner,
 4. East of I-97: north from Route 450 from Crownsville Road and crossing Generals Highway east of Crownsville State Hospital to follow Deep Ditch Branch to Maynadier Creek at the Severn River,
 5. The “Green Cathedral” and Brewer Pond,
 6. Severn Run Natural Area, Arlington Echo, Whitney’s Landing Farm, Arden Ballfields and Arden Bog area.
- A major goal of the greenways master plan should be the acquisition of the undeveloped portions of Crownsville State Hospital which would supplement and potentially connect two of these (2 and 4 above) greenways. The acquisition and development by the County of park land for passive or active recreation should further the State and County goal of creating or expanding greenways within the County. This is necessary to maintain species

habitat and promote maintenance of consolidated forest areas in their natural state, so as to maintain the habitat of forest interior dwelling birds and other dependent animal and plant species.

- Additionally, where appropriate, park and recreational facilities should be sited near proposed hiker/biker trails to encourage and facilitate safe access via bicycles to those facilities.
- The South Shore Hiker/Biker Trail should be expedited in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, and land acquisition, design and construction should proceed as quickly as possible. Adequate parking for users of the trail should be provided at convenient locations. The study and design should include connector paths to facilitate safe and convenient access from near by communities.

Other issues

- Create a central 5th police district within the Crownsville area to improve response time.
- Co-locate public safety and service agencies.