

Concept Plan

Based on the projected vision and adopted goals for the Greater Crownsville community, a Proposed Land Use Plan has been prepared which reflects the intent of the Small Area Plan Committee and public input. It is a refinement of the Anne Arundel County 1997 General Development Plan. Principal recommendations from the Committee are illustrated in the Concept Plan below. Reflecting the overall land use and development patterns, key elements of the Plan include major circulation systems, both pedestrian and vehicular, as well as activity centers and linkages. Natural areas are to be preserved. Parkland and open space, along with schools and other community facilities, are important features in the overall Concept. These elements are described below with objectives to guide their implementation.

Overall Density Pattern: Rural vs. Suburban

The predominant semi-rural character of the Crownsville area is well established and expected to continue well into the next century. Projected development of about 1400 housing units will be accommodated at relatively low density under current zoning with no significant expansion of public utilities. Waterfront subdivisions along the Severn River are essentially built-out at suburban densities ranging from quarter acre to two acre lots. Some new development will occur in areas zoned R-1 or R-2 along lower Generals Highway and in the vicinity of Crownsville Road and Defense Highway. Most areas with RA (Rural Agricultural) or RLD (Residential Low Density) zoning will retain their semi-rural character and extensive forest cover through careful siting of new homes and cluster development, which is encouraged.

Some additional development of existing commercially or industrially zoned areas is anticipated with no new shopping centers. Major retail and office development will be contained in Parole Town Center.

Circulation System: Roads and Pathways

The Crownsville road system is essentially complete with minor upgrades envisioned for some segments and at key nodes. The traffic pattern at Dorr's Corner should be modified to separate conflicting movements, and intersection improvements or traffic circles may be considered along Generals Highway to handle a steadily increasing flow of local traffic. Commuters should be diverted to I-97 to the extent possible. The Concept Plan provides for special features at entry points from Veterans Highway, I-97/Route 32, and Parole, intended to strengthen community identity.

Scenic and historic roads in the area will be preserved in their current state with only limited widening of shoulders and other safety improvements. The Plan recommends adoption of a special program for recognition and protective measures for these unique roadways throughout the Crownsville area.

Pedestrian and bicycle access are to be encouraged within local areas where safe pathways can be provided. A key element of the Concept Plan is the South Shore Trail which will extend over 12 miles from Parole to Gambrills and Odenton. This major hiker-biker path would parallel Generals Highway, linking communities and activity centers. It is envisioned as a pedestrian spine and bikeway with future connections to older neighborhoods along the Severn River, where branch pathways can be safely provided along road shoulders or on separate right-of-way (ROW) or easements. The South Shore Trail will directly link the three elementary school sites in Crownsville and major community facilities including the golf course, county fairgrounds and State Hospital site.

Activity Centers:

The Concept Plan recognizes existing retail services, employment and recreational facilities in the Crownsville area as important to the fabric of the community. It also proposes to accommodate new public facilities at the Crownsville Hospital site and create a new Community Center at the junction of Route 32 and Generals Highway. The Plan should facilitate pedestrian access to local services where possible for nearby residents.

- Dorr's Corner - Assure coordinated planning for infill and redevelopment to accommodate appropriate highway-oriented commercial uses.
- Generals Highway Business Strip - Reinforce and upgrade local retail services in the vicinity of the Crownsville Post Office.
- Local Crossroads Centers - Provide for cohesive planning and site design at key locations for convenience commercial uses serving nearby neighborhoods. These typically include a gas station and small stores. (e.g. Lusby Corners and Sunrise Beach Road)
- Local Community Centers - Maintain desired services in Herald Harbor and Sherwood Forest as a focal point within those communities. Encourage through flexible regulations, small convenience uses in other neighborhoods to serve local needs.
- Historic Center - Preserve and enhance the area at Old Generals Highway and Millersville Road, including Baldwin Hall, church and school, which is a traditional focus of interest and community activity.
- New Community Center - The Concept Plan envisions a cluster of community facilities, centrally located at the I-97 gateway to Crownsville. This complex could include a fire station, police substation and possibly a small branch library, senior services, recreation and South Shore Trail access and ranger station.

Parks and Open Space: Active and Passive Recreation; Natural Environmental Areas

The Crownsville Concept Plan shows extensive land for natural open space and organized recreational use, comprising well over 20% of the overall area. This includes floodplains and wetland areas to be preserved in a system of stream valley parks related to watersheds of the Severn River, North River and Bacon Ridge Branch, including abutting steep slopes and buffer strips.

Active recreational use includes ballfields in Arden and Generals Highway Corridor Park, as well as the Eisenhower Golf Course. The Annapolis Waterworks site, the Bacon Ridge Natural Area, the Severn Run Environmental Areas and surplus land from the State Hospital site west of I-97 will provide for passive recreation in the future. These existing parks and natural areas are often contiguous and form Greenway systems which extend through major stream valleys or link to the Severn River. Large forested areas of the “Green Cathedral” and undeveloped land in Sherwood Forest are a major feature in the Concept Plan. Along with the South Shore Trail, which will function as kind of a linear park strip, these green areas form a pattern of open space which characterizes Crownsville as a semi-rural community.