

Community Design

With assistance of the Faux Group as special consultants, issues of community design were considered and ideas explored to help achieve the visions of the Plan, as they pertain to visual character, improved access and services in the area. Through specific design studies, the intent is to preserve historic and aesthetic qualities and enhance existing business areas, primarily serving the local population while maintaining and reinforcing the desired image of the community.

Key elements of the Vision Statement were addressed in the community design studies:

- The Crownsville area is to retain its rural or semi-rural character. Its rich heritage is to be preserved through protecting its extensive woodlands and natural beauty, historic sites, buildings, and roads-- particularly along old Generals Highway, St. Stephen's Church Road, and Severn Chapel Road.
- Safe and convenient access within the community is to be assured with adequate transportation serving the needs of the people without destroying the natural character and environmental qualities. Convenient access would be provided for all segments of the population, regardless of age or dependency.
- A community center is envisioned to bring together future public facilities in a convenient location and to serve as a focal point for the Crownsville area. A full compliment of services, both public and private, would be provided.

Overall analysis was provided which identified various neighborhoods and subcommunities within the planning area, and evaluated both vehicular circulation and potential for a network of bicycle and pedestrian paths, providing linkage within certain areas. Also possible alternatives for a community service center were explored for review by the Committee. It was decided to focus on a centrally located site along the Generals Highway corridor which could accommodate various public facilities with shared access and parking. Although the design study pertains to a specific site, it is intended to illustrate the *concept* of co-location of community related uses, as suggested in the Vision Statement and further explained in the Community Facilities chapter of this report. One of the key elements of the plan is a new fire station, to be relocated from Herald Harbor, serving the Crownsville community from a more central, accessible location. Although there are no budget commitments for other facilities at this time, a coordinated approach is desirable to help create a true center of activity, bringing together public facilities, and closely related to local businesses in the area. Also there would be a unique opportunity for linkage to the proposed South Shore Trail which is nearby. A similar approach could be applied to alternative sites at the Crownsville State Hospital Center, which lies only a mile to the south.

Also studies were undertaken to illustrate design guidelines for the preservation of scenic and historic roads in the Crownsville area, as reflected in the Vision Statement.

Crownsville Community Services Center

Conceptual Long Range Development Plan

(Prepared by The Faux Group, 1998)

Concept: To establish a central public site where a cluster of community services can be developed over time and in a co-located arrangement, in order to efficiently provide needed services and create a focus of social activity in the Crownsville area. Development may occur in the form of a cluster of free standing single use buildings and / or as a few multi-purpose buildings with spaces leased to users as needed. Development will be designed to facilitate access for pedestrians and bicyclists using the future South Shore Trail.

Actions:

- Acquire a parcel of land of sufficient size for both current and future needs.
- Identify or establish the appropriate public entity to oversee site development and management.
- Develop a phased site master plan and site management plan with appropriate controls, defined development parcels or pad sites, based on shared infrastructure and amenities such as entrances and driveways, parking with overflow space for special events, combined stormwater management, etc.
- Investigate potential traffic impacts and establish parameters for site access and circulation and possibly a maximum trip generation number for the parcel.

Possible Site Development Program:

- Fire Station and Village Green
(multi-purpose structure with three bays, indoor hall for events/ community activities; Village Green for outdoor events and space for additional parking to accommodate up to 400 cars)
- Police Station
- Access to South Shore Trail (related amenities to be provided)
 - Trail improvements in former railroad ROW
 - Safe crossing of Route 32 and MD 178 at signalized intersection
 - Possible ranger station / rest stop and restroom facilities
 - Possible children's play area
- Farmer's Market (seasonal use)
- Future Post Office (possibly created as leased space in another building)
- Future small Branch Library
- Future Senior Center (or services located in another building on the site)
- Possible concessions for local entrepreneurial activity:
 - Refreshment stand for trail users (e.g. snowballs & ice cream)
 - Drive-through pharmacy, Cafe and/or deli / convenience shop
- Possible street connections through site to developable parcels behind

Generals Highway Corridor - Design Guidelines

Generals Highway has also been designated as a scenic and historic road. The Small Area Planning Committee has focused on this important artery as an element of the Plan to be protected and enhanced. Several problem intersections were identified for improvements such as left turn lanes and even “roundabouts” as an alternative to new traffic signals.

It has also been recommended that a special overlay zone be established and design studies undertaken in the Generals Highway corridor, which is defined as an eight mile stretch from Bestgate Road to Veterans Highway. Analysis would be done for individual segments to evaluate abutting land use, zoning, historical character and other factors affecting design criteria. The Committee identified three “gateway” points into the community, at Dorrs Corner, I-97 and Parole, where special signage, landscape and architectural treatment would be appropriate. Also, pedestrian linkages and coordination with the proposed hiker-biker trail were suggested.

Although a comprehensive study of the General’s Highway corridor cannot be accomplished under the Small Area Plan at this time, it should be given priority as the plan is implemented. Some of the parameters of such a study are described below.

- MD 178 serves as the community “main street”, but must also be shared with some outside traffic. For its entire length the road is designated as a “principal arterial;” however, the right-of-way and pavement section vary considerably from the newer, widened portion approaching Annapolis to the narrow, winding historic segment north of the I-97 junction. Traffic volumes on the lower portion are heaviest with over 15,000 vehicles per day compared with only 7750 on the northern segment.
- Generals Highway follows a major ridgeline between the Severn River and Bacon Ridge Branch of the South River. A network of local roads extend to waterfront communities on the east, or westward toward Crofton, serving the Baldwin Hills area and subdivisions to the south near Defense Highway. It is truly a spine road which links nearly all the major activity centers, including schools, recreation, local shopping and other services. The Post Office is strategically located in the mid section along with local businesses.
- There are essentially three major segments of the corridor to be addressed in any design analysis, which could serve as a basis for special overlay zones. Road alignment, vertical profile and typical cross section distinguish these areas, as well as vegetation and developed frontage. The northern segment, known as Old Generals Highway, extends from the I-97/ Route 32 junction to Veterans Highway, the mid section from that point south to Crownsville Road, and the southern segment to Bestgate Road in Parole Town Center. Each area would be field surveyed with various characteristics documented through photos and base maps; scenic and historic aspects would be recorded and special

features identified. Then design concepts, criteria and guidelines would be prepared.