

Economic Development

Existing Conditions

The Crownsville area is home to a population of over 15,000 residents, but provides employment for only 1100 full and part time workers in private businesses. Government and institutional employment at the State Hospital Site amounts to nearly as much, including adjunct facilities, the Fairfield Nursing Home and offices of the Department of Housing and Community Development. A further breakdown of employment is given below.

There are currently about 6000 housing units in Crownsville, with a projected build-out of some 7500 units under current zoning. About 1800 acres, less than 10% of the overall area, has been developed at suburban densities, ranging from quarter acre lots to 2 acres per unit. Only single family detached housing has been built, as lower density zoning and lack of public utilities preclude townhouses or apartments.

Employment

In a recent inventory of commercial/industrial space and employment in the Crownsville area, about 100 businesses were listed. Most firms were small, with over half of them employing fewer than five workers. The largest employers were along the Route 3 corridor and Veterans Highway, including the Nierman Weeks Company and Carter Fabrications, which together have more than 150 workers. Reliable Contracting Company, Ryder Truck Rental, Jones Cable and the nearby Knollwood Manor Nursing Home account for some 300 workers. There are nearly 400 employed in the Generals Highway corridor and about 100 in businesses along Defense Highway, west of Parole. Major firms such as Alliant Techsystems, formerly Honeywell, and others are located outside Crownsville, within the Parole Town Center Growth Management Area. A summary of employment and space occupied is given below in Table 1:

Table 1. Employment in the Crownsville Small Area

<u>Area</u>	<u>Square Footage</u>	<u>Number of Employees</u>
Route 3 Corridor & vicinity	120,000 sq.ft.	300 employees
Veterans Highway/Dorr's Corner	100,000 sq.ft.	200 employees
Generals Highway corridor	100,000 sq.ft.	400 employees
Lusby's Corner/ Defense Hwy.	<u>50,000 sq.ft.</u>	<u>100 employees</u>
Approximate totals	370,000 sq.ft.	1100 employees

Retail and Services

According to a recent inventory of businesses and employment, there is over 75,000 square feet of commercial space in the Generals Highway corridor. Most of this space is free-standing buildings, but several are clustered in small centers of 2-5 shops totaling 3000-8000 square feet. There are three basic groupings of businesses --in the 1000 block, 1200 block and

1300 block of Generals Hwy., each of which contains 18-24,000 square feet. Apart from these strips, there is a kennel and two veterinarian hospitals with another 5000 square feet, and the Herald Harbor Inn and Mini-Mart, providing about 8,000 square feet.

Given a population of about 15,000 residents to be served, the residents need to depend on shopping centers outside the area for many of their daily needs. The nearest supermarkets are in Crofton and Parole, and involve a five to ten mile drive.

There is only one commercial marina in the area, despite extensive shoreline of over 22 miles on the Severn River. Smith's Marina is relatively small, with only 60 boat slips, dry storage and launch ramp. It has direct access to Round Bay.

The aerial photo shows the middle segment of the Generals Highway Corridor between Herald Harbor Road and Crownsville Road. Businesses are clustered in two locations; the northern grouping includes ten, while the southern group includes nine at the Post Office.

In addition to the private businesses listed above, the Crownsville State Hospital site provides a nucleus of employment, including:

Hospital Center (in shifts)	550
Fairfield Nursing Home	75
Department of Housing & Community Development	300
Morgan State University	120



Generals Highway Corridor and Hospital Complex

Goals and Recommendations

The Plan sets forth a three point program with supporting goals for the future of Crownsville's economy. The program focuses on agriculture, business and community facilities with subpoints identifying goals, objectives, programs and organizations needed to realize the vision as developed from Committee meetings, Subcommittee meetings, Forums and public and business comments. The vision is placed in the context of the small area philosophy, the GDP, and with regard to specific definitions of key terms in the discussion, most notably, rural character and design overlay. The goals seek to include a positive stance toward economic opportunity in the area rather than a restrictive reaction to return to the past.

The Plan recognizes the Crownsville area to be unique among its surrounding communities in its still predominantly rural character with a considerable number of natural features including the watersheds of the Severn and South Rivers and the Green Cathedral. Furthermore, Crownsville has a rich history that traces its roots to the colonial era but that also includes the collective memories of many families still residing within its herein defined borders. Both the preservation of the Crownsville so beloved by its residents and the development of its future rest on honoring both its natural and historical heritage.

The recommendations also stand on the definition of several terms which carry both a technical and a common meaning. These terms are defined below before the recommendations are offered.

Rural character: The aspect that is identified by the presence of farms, open lands, roads without curbing or storm sewer systems, small businesses, residential areas of rural, low, and low-medium density.

Design overlay: The identification of design requirements in addition to the activities defined by zoning ordinances.

Finally, the recommendations are intended to reflect in the Crownsville Area, the vision of the GDP which states that, "Anne Arundel County will...concentrate growth in areas which best utilize existing and planned infrastructure, protect the natural environment, promote economic growth and provide for a diversity of living environments." The Plan recognizes that economic change is inevitable within the Crownsville area. Its goal is to provide for systematic growth and evolution that preserves the Crownsville economy's many owner-operated businesses and agricultural enterprises. The vision presented here is not a compendium of ordinances and laws, but rather a series of goals designed to guide the formulation and implementation of future laws, county and private programs. The vision will require the attention of experts in policy and law and the continued involvement of Crownsville citizens to assure the quality of life that seems to be the desire of most Crownsville residents.

The future of agriculture

Goal 1. Recognizing that Crownsville is unique among its surrounding communities in retaining its rural character, the Plan recommends preserving existing farmland by supporting the efforts of farmers and existing farming industry. The Plan recommends promoting increased farming efforts including agriculture, nursery/landscaping activities, equestrian activities and limited aquaculture.

Recommendations:

- Using existing legal mechanisms, promote the intergenerational conveyance of farming activities and provide incentives for continued farming activity.
- Promote awareness and develop markets for local products through a farmers' market.
- Investigate development of a public, quasi-public or private foundation for the preservation of farmland as an alternative to business or residential development for families who are leaving farming. Such investigation would include assessment of existing organizations with similar missions in Anne Arundel County and Maryland.
- Work with County to provide financial incentives to locally owned and operated agricultural activities to upgrade business sites and operations.

The future of small business

Goal 2. Recognizing that existing locally owned and operated businesses that provide services to Crownsville residents are valuable assets reflecting the rural character and heritage of the area, the Plan recommends preserving businesses in existing commercially zoned areas and supports home businesses located on land that is zoned residential provided that they are in compliance with County ordinances.

Recommendations:

- The rural history of the area has allowed for existing non-conforming locally owned businesses in residential areas, and the Plan supports the preservation of these businesses.
- The decentralized nature of community development in the Crownsville Area supports small businesses such as convenience markets within the confines of a residential area. As an example, Herald Harbor and Sherwood Forest each have such enterprises within their boundaries. They are the centers for these communities and as such must be afforded the opportunity to upgrade their facilities within limits and without the expansion or the addition of activities. The Plan supports classifications and programs that enable these businesses to maintain and upgrade their facilities as they continue to provide their traditional services.

- Many locally owned businesses in Crownsville serve agriculture, construction and home maintenance. They have operated in a homestead-type facility with residence and business located on the same parcel of property. As such, they are a critical part of Crownsville's economy and should be allowed to continue; however, they have an obligation to other Crownsville residents to provide a facade that is in keeping with the rural/historical/residential atmosphere of the area. The Plan encourages the County to provide incentives for upgrading buildings and screening activities of businesses from local roadways and abutting residential neighborhoods.
- The historic economic development in Crownsville has resulted in a number of commercial loci that are collections of owner-operated businesses serving their immediate residents. The Plan recommends that future business growth be limited to these areas.
- The Plan recommends that the historic roots of these areas be recognized through a preservation program that identifies their historic names and uses those names to develop a community identity around these areas.
- Strip malls and franchises are inconsistent with the rural character of Crownsville. Design overlays for the existing commercially zoned areas should limit square footage; provide guidelines for signage, and promote combining commercial entrances/exits and parking areas to maintain the safety of Crownsville's major roadways. The two lane concept of these roadways including MD 178, Crownsville Road, MD 450, Sunrise Beach Road and Millersville Road is in keeping with the rural character of the area.
- Crownsville businesses should be afforded the benefits of business trends to maintain viability and to provide for business evolution. Trends toward home offices will likely affect the nature of economic activity in Crownsville. Home offices do not necessarily place a demand on traditional County facilities; however, their operators can become a major economic force and ally in the future of Crownsville's economy. The Plan recommends the development of an organization to bring together owner-operators of existing businesses and home offices with the mission of enabling these activities while preserving the environmental and residential quality of life in Crownsville.
- The impact of technology on economic activity cannot be ignored in the vision for Crownsville business. Increased communication and the opportunities for market development using technology do not necessarily carry with them a heavy impact of the physical facilities and resources of a community. Just as technological literacy and capability is a requirement for young people in our schools, so is it an important resource for Crownsville businesses. The Plan recommends a County/Residents/Business initiative to bring the opportunity for such literacy and capability to the locally owned

and operated business and to work with service providers including telephone companies to develop the first virtual business community in a small area.

The future of community facilities and services

Goal 3. Crownsville is the site of the Crownsville State Hospital, the largest single parcel of land within the Crownsville area. Maintain the character of the Hospital Site, while allowing for the provision of some community facilities and services.

Recommendations:

- Contain existing State development at the site at its current or lesser level and dedicating any surplussed land for Crownsville community services (e.g. library, senior center, ball fields).
- All new buildings on the site should be in keeping with the integrity of the neighborhood, held to a height of three stories above ground and follow any other requirements as set forth by any future design overlays.
- Crownsville residents have been specific in their requests for additional community services including traditionally public and commercial activities. The County should pursue a library and a community center for Crownsville. In the event that the County does not choose to further these facilities, the Plan recommends the formation of a grass roots organization to bring both of these institutions to Crownsville.
- The Plan recommends investigation of appropriate locations and operators for a small grocery store and a pharmacy in the existing commercial areas of Crownsville. The facilities and scope of these operations should comply with the existing character of the community and any forthcoming design overlay requirements.