

VIII. COMMUNITY FACILITIES

There are a number of issues that are of importance to the residents. It is felt that in general police and library services are adequate to serve the needs of the local residents for the foreseeable future. Most of the concerns reside with fire and rescue, recreational opportunities and public access to the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries.

A. RECREATION:

Anne Arundel County should utilize existing County owned parklands to accommodate both the environmentally sensitive areas (open space/green ways) and provide much needed recreational facilities (athletic complex, picnic areas and playgrounds). These facilities can peacefully co-exist with proper and careful planning.

After reviewing an inventory of county owned property available for park use, there are two parcels that can be utilized for passive and recreational use.

FRANKLIN POINT PARK:

Franklin Point is a 488-acre parcel located on route 468 with easy access from Deale, Churchton and Shady Side. Initially, it is recommend that a community panel along with the Department of Parks and Recreation survey the existing recreational facilities and determine the need for additional facilities. Further, this panel should supervise a comprehensive and independent biological and environmental analysis of Franklin Point. This analysis would be the basis for determining the suitability of the park for various public use purposes. In the event that active uses are determined to be needed and are appropriate for Franklin Point Park, it is recommend that a maximum of 20% of the Park be used for multi-use activities. Public forum and survey responses included requests to include activities like, picnic areas, playgrounds, athletic fields, tennis courts, hiker/biker trails, restroom facilities, and a possible swimming pool.

This recommendation will ensure that, at a minimum, fully 80% of the park (nearly 400 areas) will be preserved for passive use. It is envisioned that there will be a nature educational center with natural paths or boardwalks to the water for observation, and that the bay front portion of the Park will preserve the natural wetlands/SAV restoration area as proposed in the GDP (page 44, Sensitive Area Policies and Actions).

With proper planning (clustering active uses and locating them along the already disturbed areas of the Park adjacent to Route 468 and upper Dent Road), the majority of the Park could remain contiguous and untouched, thereby buffering the more pristine bay front portions from the active use areas along Shady Side and Dent Roads. This would allow the County to establish a natural preserve while meeting some of the stated needs for active recreation.

JACK CREEK PARK:

Jack Creek Park is a 58-acre parcel located on Snug Harbor Road in Shady Side. Because of the size of this parcel and a Blue Heron Rookery, which exists on the property along the waterfront, it is recommended that this park be left as a passive area park.

A picnic area pavilion and small playground could be constructed close to the access road, and a walking trail to the waterfront for nature walks, bird watching and quiet educational purposes could be planned.

DEALE WHARF:

The County currently owns a small wharf in Deale on less than an acre of land. Historically this wharf was used by watermen to sell oysters, load and unload crabpots and even drop a new engine by tow truck into their boats. Due to structural problems the County eliminated vehicle traffic on the pier for safety reasons.

It is recommend that the pier be inspected for structural soundness and repaired if necessary to again allow pickup size vehicles 1 ton or less use of this wharf. Vehicle traffic could be limited to certain times of day or even a specific day or days of the week if necessary in order that a multiple of uses could occur on site (i.e. fishing and crabbing etc.).

There is also a large parcel adjacent to this property that could be purchased for a covered picnic area, restrooms added and additional parking spaces provide. In addition time curfews for this park should be established and strictly enforced due to potential impacts on surrounding residential properties.

B. OTHER RECREATIONAL NEEDS:

ISSUE: The Deale Village area is in great need of some parkland area to give a balance to the commercial/high density residential areas. The athletic fields behind the Deale Elementary School are at capacity. There is currently no area for children to ride bikes or adults to walk.

RECOMMENDATION:

Recommend that the County purchase a 19.94-acre parcel that is available for sale by the Deale Elks. This property is close to the Deale Elementary School and a right- of- way could be obtained between the two properties. This property could be used for hiker/biker trails, a picnic area and a multi-purpose athletic field.

ISSUE: There is a need for a public boat ramp and/or fishing and crabbing pier. There is also a need to supply gear storage for the local watermen.

RECOMMENDATION: The Johns Hopkins site in Shady Side is ideally suited for these purposes. However it has recently been sold into private ownership. The owner has indicated a willingness to work with the community and provide some public facilities. As recommended by the Economic Development Subcommittee, the County should work with the new owner to provide some of these facilities.

ISSUE: Watercraft, including canoes, kayaks, rowing boats and small sailboats have minimal environmental effect and are increasing in popularity. In other areas of the county there are small non-motorized watercraft rentals and small public launching areas. The county currently publishes a brochure listing the areas providing these services.

RECOMMENDATION: The Deale/Shady Side area has the potential for many public and commercial waterfront access points. As park plans are developed, wherever feasible, sites should allow parking and shore access for non-motorized watercraft users. There should also be non-motorized boat rentals available as in other parts of the County.

ISSUE: There were a few comments regarding horse trails from the public forum. Our area is small town water oriented with few farms to provide riding opportunities.

RECOMMENDATION:

This issue should be addressed through a detailed study by the county for the Deale and Shady Side area (and South County) to consider providing links between farms for riding trails and/or boarding facilities.

C. SOUTH COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION BUILDING:

The South County Recreation Center is open for multi-recreational use for all ages. Programs include basketball, ceramics, dances and day care for children. The facility has not been adequately publicized within the school system or the communities of South County. The plan recommends that this center be supported and maintained.

The Rhodesside and Harwell Report includes a recommendation that a recreation center and community center be constructed in the Deale Village Center. The plan supports this concept and recognizes the location as the best overall to support the revitalization of Deale and as an opportunity to provide a good location for community activities.

D. EDUCATION:

Anne Arundel County should provide the best possible education for all County residents, and strive for equity among all schools. High quality educational facilities and programs should be supported and maintained as an investment in our future. School maintenance (programs and facilities) should be strongly supported.

ISSUE: Eighth graders are attending Southern High School due to an overcrowding condition at Southern Middle School. This situation puts younger children in an advanced situation with much older students and puts unnecessary stress on the children and the learning situation. Several parents have pulled their 8th graders from this situation and enrolled them in private schools. When parents start enrolling their children in private schools they often wind up enrolling siblings as well, and the system starts to lose some of its most active and dedicated parents who could provide and be an active participant in school support programs.

RECOMMENDATION: Construct a wing at Southern Middle in lieu of constructing a new middle school.

ISSUE: Southern High School has numerous problems that need attention in a timely manner. The main problem areas are as follow:

- Overcrowding due to 8th graders housed there until an addition is built onto the middle school.
- A lack of teaching materials. Books are not the same version and there are not enough books for each student to have one of their own.
- Science labs are inadequate, out of date, and need to be upgraded.
- The general feeling of the polled students is that North and West County area schools (they have visited) have much better facilities. These include state of the art computer labs, adequate books and library facilities.

RECOMMENDATION: In order to provide the students of Southern Anne Arundel County with an adequate learning environment, the County should provide funds to bring the interior of the building to a level that is equivalent to other high schools in the County. A professional building survey by a competent engineering firm should be conducted to identify major defects. (Interior improvements should include at least the following: painting of classrooms to eliminate multi-colored walls, placing doors on all restroom stalls and replacing student lockers which are either not usable or in poor condition.

Our schools are a major factor in determining the quality of life which makes a community desirable and which maintains the stability of a community and related property values.

ISSUE: There are no adult/college courses available in South County. College classes offered are being held in Annapolis or further north. In addition there are no creative art classes or adult education classes offered.

RECOMMENDATION: Anne Arundel County and Anne Arundel Community College should jointly participate in developing an extension facility in the Deale/Shady Side area. The classes and programs could be offered at a number of facilities including the Carrie Weedon Science Center, Galesville Hall, or at a new facility.

The Rhodesside and Harwell report has suggested that a new community center and recreation facility be constructed in the downtown Deale area. Collaboration between the County and the community college on the design and programmatic functions of the new facility could provide the opportunities desired by the community.

E. POLICE:

The Southern District Police Department covers 156 square miles, which is 38% of Anne Arundel County. Sixteen percent (16%) of all response calls received are in the Southern District, with an average response time of four (4) minutes.

There are currently 90 sworn officers, 19 reserve officers and seven civilians assigned to the Southern District, which will soon be rearranged according to a new redistricting plan. As the population has risen in the last 15 years, the Southern District Police Department has adequately increased police officers and personnel to keep pace with the growth.

Recommendation: The police department holds community relations meetings every 3rd Thursday on a monthly basis. It is recommended that the County develop a better method of informing the public about the monthly meetings. The police depend on community involvement to resolve issues and solve crimes.

F. FIRE SERVICE:

The International Association of Firefighters has learned from years of experience that inadequate staffing on the fire scene can result in unnecessary loss of life and injury. All too often the issue of firefighter staffing boils down to municipal budgetary battles. Safety is the key issue and should be the first consideration.

The area is served by 3 community fire stations; Deale Company 42, Galesville Company 1 and Shady Side Company 41. The Lothian Company number 9 also supports the area when necessary.

It was found during research that the Deale and Shady Side stations are staffed by the bare minimum as set forth in the IAFF Safe Fire Fighter Staffing Manual. Due to a decrease in the number of volunteers that were depended on in prior years and no significant increase in paid personnel, the fire stations are unable to respond to multiple calls at any given time.

ISSUE: Eighty percent (80%) of 911 calls in the area are for medical assistance. Currently Anne Arundel County requires 2 EMT personnel to respond to an emergency medical call and also requires 2 personnel to respond to a fire call. The Deale and Shady Side stations are only staffed by a team of three. If two of the EMT's are on an ambulance call there is only one left, therefore the station has to go out of service until the ambulance crew returns. The average ambulance call lasts approximately 2 ½ hours. If a fire call is received during this time other fire stations must respond from a further distance.

There is also only one ladder truck south of South River. The Deale Volunteers own this vehicle and it is currently stationed at the Deale fire station. When Deale is 'Out of Service' due to an ambulance call, there is inadequate personnel to man a very important piece of equipment, therefore if a ladder truck is needed it has to come from West Annapolis.

RECOMMENDATION: Add independently staffed paramedic units to each fire station. This will add the extra manpower to keep the fire fighting services adequately staffed and 'In Service'.

ISSUE: Lack of water supply to areas not in close proximity to a natural water supply.

RECOMMENDATION: Two years ago Anne Arundel County Fire Department conducted a study on requiring the placement of underground water storage tanks. Currently only a few of these tanks have been installed. It is recommended that the study be reviewed and updated to determine the adequate size of these tanks and required locations. It should be made mandatory that all new develops and expanded existing developments install the required water tanks for fire suppression.

G. SENIOR CITIZENS:

A comprehensive survey should be conducted in South County to determine the full scope of needs of the elderly and strategies should be devised to meet those needs in South County.

ISSUE: The senior center that was located in Shady Side was closed due to a lack of adequate funding. The closest center is now located in Edgewater. The director of the center did not feel that it was too far out of the way for the seniors of South County and Deale/Shady Side to attend programs at the existing center.

RECOMMENDATION: Establish a senior center in the Deale/Shady Side area with provisions for transportation. The Rhodeside & Harwell report has located a site for a center in downtown Deale that may be appropriate.

ISSUE: The citizens in our area are concerned that when they need assisted living they will have to leave the area. Assisted living and nursing homes to serve the growing elderly population are inadequate. There are no nursing homes south of Edgewater.

RECOMMENDATION: Research creative solutions that could provide safe and affordable assisted living that is appropriate to the Deale/Shady Side area. Consider zoning changes to allow in-law apartments on residential property.

G. CITIZEN COMMUNICATION:

It is recommended that the County develop an ongoing mechanism to effectively communicate with the local people and community organizations.

MAP of community Facilities