

Community Design

Introduction

As part of the Small Area Planning process a Community Design Consultant was hired to assist the Committee and the County Planning Staff. The Consultant's task was to:

- Assess community design issues within the Severn Small Area based on a review of the physical environment, trends in development, comments made by the community during the Severn Public Forums and other factors.
- Identify opportunities for improvement and to work with the Staff and Committee to select areas for further investigation.
- To assist the Staff and Committee in developing recommendations for these selected areas.

The Faux Group was the design consultant working with the Severn Small Area. They investigated several issues and opportunities and presented several proposals for consideration. A number of these were refined and are now reflected in the other chapters of this report such as Economic Development, Land Use and Zoning and Community Facilities. The remaining community design proposal is as follows:

Create a stronger community identity for the Severn Area.

Expand the Center of Activity at the intersection of MD 170 and MD 174 in order to create a focus for the community - a "Heart of Severn".

Several alternative land use/design concepts for a Severn Village Center were developed and discussed by the Staff and Committee and presented at the second Severn Public Forum. Out of the Committees discussions and the comments received from the community, the following Severn Village Plan has emerged (issues pertaining to specific Land Use and Zoning changes and recommendations are found in the Economic Development, Land Use and Zoning Chapter of this Plan).

The Severn Village Plan

General Actions

Several actions are being considered to help create a Severn Village Center.

- Revitalization Designation - The county should designate the Severn Village Area as a Revitalization Area and apply for state recognition for that status in order to obtain funding assistance and incentives for private renovations and public improvements.

- Revitalization Plan - The county, property owners and businesses in the area should work together to create a detailed revitalization strategy for the area.
- Land use and Zoning Changes - The recommended land use and zoning changes that would enable the Severn Village to be created are illustrated on maps in the Economic Development, Land Use and Zoning Chapter of this Plan (Maps 4, 5, 5A and 7).
- Small Business District – As part of those land use and zoning recommendations, a Small Business District along MD 174 in the vicinity of the Severn Elementary School is proposed. This would allow older homes to be converted to commercial and offices uses within the village center while creating a buffer/transition for neighboring homes.
- Development Character - Establish design standards for development in the revitalization area in order to ensure a village like character and a Main Street. In order to guide development to take on a village-like character, design guidelines are included in Appendix D. These guidelines recommend specific design configurations and methods for issues such as massing, site design, focal areas, streetscape, access and circulation, parking, architecture, and signage.
- Vision Plan – A conceptual design for the layout and character of the proposed Severn Village is shown in the Vision Plan (Map 20). Possible development/redevelopment sites, building relationships and the potential scale of the Village are depicted in the rendering.
- Character and scale of the proposed main street for the Severn Village (Old Donaldson Avenue) is shown in the Old Donaldson Street and Streetscape drawing.
- Potential issues associated with the Severn Village Vision Plan development configuration are highlighted for further review and investigation in the Right-of-Way Issues drawing.
- Road/Streetscape improvements - Several county and state road improvements will be needed to help with revitalization. Some of the concepts that were recommended for further study as part of an overall strategy plan for the area are as follows:
 -) Create a roundabout at MD170/Donaldson Avenue to permit high capacity, low speed traffic through the intersection and create safe crossings for pedestrians and bikes.
 -) Create a suburban boulevard style treatment with sidewalks, decorative street lighting, landscaping, and class two bike lanes on MD 170 and on Donaldson Avenue throughout the revitalization area.
 -) Create a "main street style" business district streetscape with on-street parking and decorative street lighting along Clark Station Road and Old Donaldson Avenue.

-) Vacate Horwath Lane to create more developable parcels on the southeast corner of MD 170 and Donaldson Avenue.
-) Extend Peach Tree Circle Road east to MD170 and create an intersection with Old Donaldson Avenue. Add a traffic light to create safe crossings for pedestrians and bikes.
-) Realign the intersection of Old Donaldson Avenue and Donaldson Avenue to align with the entrance to Severn Danza Park. Add a traffic light to create safe crossings for pedestrians and bikes.
-) Upgrade the underpass under the railroad tracks (AMTRAK) to permit bike traffic to cross and to provide better visibility and greater safety. This will encourage greater use of the primary connection between the two halves of Severn.