

## **Chapter 7**

### **Land Use and Zoning**

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#### **Existing Land Use Conditions**

There are approximately 10,350 acres of land in the Severna Park Small Area. Single family housing accounts for 65% of land use in this area while multi-family housing comprises 2.5% of the land (6,759 acres and 46 acres respectively).

Commercial land use comprises about 2.8% of the land use in The Greater Severna Park Area, with 2.5% used for retail purposes and .3% used for offices. A majority of the commercial uses lie on both sides of Route 2. Along this corridor is the Severna Park Village Center, an area that incorporates several retail centers including the Severna Park Mall. Other commercial sites include Benfield Road and Veteran's Highway, Jumpers Hole Road and Benfield Road, Earleigh Heights Road and Ritchie Highway (refer to Map 1).

Approximately 119 acres, or 1.1% of land in Greater Severna Park is used as agricultural land and 358 acres, (3.5%) is used as open space. There are also 722 acres (7.0 %) that are used for recreation and parks. Other land, in the Severna Park Small Planning Area includes government uses which constitute about 4.0% (415 acres), utilities, such as roads, water, and sewer facilities, which use about 3.4 % (352 acres) and industrial uses, which constitute less than 0.1%, (23 acres). There are approximately 1,272 acres of undeveloped land in Greater Severna Park, which constitutes 12.5 % of the planning area.

#### **Existing Zoning**

Zoning is one of the primary planning tools used to regulate the use and intensity, development, and preservation of land in the County. All land in the County is classified in one or more zoning classifications which includes agricultural, open space, residential, commercial, industrial, mixed use and maritime.

Low density residential zoning, R1 and R2, accounts for 59% of all land zoned in the Severna Park Area, with 2,269 acres zoned R1 and 4,151 acres zoned R2. The R1 and R2 zoning classifications permit single family homes on one acre and half acre lots respectively. The R5 zone permits 5 dwellings per acre and accounts for 23% of all land in Greater Severna Park planning area. Only 1.0% (40 acres) of land is zoned R10, a zoning classification that permits 10 dwellings per acre. The Severna Park Area does not contain any land within the R15, R22 or R44 zoning classifications (refer to Map 2).

Land zoned for commercial use accounts for less than 5% of all land in the Severna Park Area. Commercial zoning is equally distributed between the C1, neighborhood and community commercial zone, C2, commercial office zone, C3, general retail zone, and C4, highway commercial zone. Most of the commercial zoning in the Greater Severna Park is located on Ritchie Highway with some commercial businesses located on Veteran's Highway and on Jumper's Hole Road. Other zoning classifications within the Severna Park Small Area include

820 acres of land zoned as open space (8% of the total), 36 acres (1%) of land zoned MA1, a classification for community marinas, and 22 acres (1%) of land zoned for industrial uses.

## **Community Background**

Greater Severna Park contains a number of small communities, some of which were once summer cottages along the shores of the Severn and Magothy River. Neighborhoods of densely built bungalows around the water created a strong sense of community among its residents. Many of these communities along the Severn and Magothy Rivers have community water access. Other neighborhoods developed after the Baltimore/Annapolis Rail line connected the two cities, making the Severna Park Area an attractive bedroom community to Baltimore, Annapolis, and later Washington, DC. Until the 1980's, most of the commercial businesses had been local neighborhood stores and shops and were distributed throughout the Severna Park Area along Veteran's Highway and around Jumper's Hole Road.

Recommendations for land use emphasize the need to strengthen community identity and support diversity through proper land use designation. The Plan also supports development that utilizes public facilities to their full potential and preserves undeveloped land for greenways and open space.

(Maps inserted here. To see these maps please go to the Severna Park library or you may purchase a copy of the plan at the Office of Planning and Zoning.)

## **Land Use Recommendations**

- Create a residential structure and housing pattern that strengthens the sense of community identity, provides for a broad range of housing opportunities, fosters residential stability and community character, and enhances the overall quality of life in the Severna Park Planning Area.
- Promote and continually state the need to upgrade the quality of existing and developing neighborhoods with assets and amenities that will insure stability and provide a sound basis for the protection and enhancement of homeowner equities.
- Provide for a continuous residential development pattern that will minimize the costly scattering of public services, facilities and utilities.
- Encourage the design of residential neighborhoods which preserve as much of the original land form and tree cover as possible
- Place a high priority on the continual upgrading, rehabilitation and conservation of existing living areas through public and private actions and by strategically utilizing public programs and capital improvements toward this end.
- Provide for an effective transition between residential uses and adjoining non-residential uses through the imaginative use of urban design and the development of effective buffering techniques and standards.

- Encourage the design of housing and living areas that create safe places, which will in turn minimize vulnerability to crime and facilitate unobstructed access for emergency vehicles.
- Provide a broad range of housing opportunities and neighborhood choices, which meet the needs of different age groups, family sizes, life styles, and incomes.
- Encourage the demolition of vacant, dilapidated houses that are not historically significant which cannot or will not be upgraded in order to eliminate their blighting influence.
- Encourage removal of incompatible, illegal, and non-conforming uses that intrude into and disrupt the residential living environment of the Greater Severna Park neighborhoods.
- Integrate passive and active open space within well-designed commercial areas.
- Locate development according to the opportunities and constraints presented by local environmental characteristics.
- Define a permanent open space system comprised of private, governmental and institutional facilities.
- Identify and preserve natural and man-made features that have a significant influence on the environmental and aesthetic quality of Greater Severna Park.
- Establish an implementation strategy that utilizes existing laws, ordinances, and public policies and fosters the legislation of new programs for the achievement of environmental objectives by guiding development into the most appropriate areas.
- Establish and support design criteria that assures the consideration of building aesthetics and design, interior circulation, that fosters the development of creative, interesting spaces, encourages development that is in harmony with the natural landscape and sensitive to environmental features and creates living and working spaces that have personal identity and that are built to the human scale.
- Provide new, expanded or redeveloped commercial areas with urban design features, landscaping and well-sited structures served by a well-designed internal circulation system.
- Locate commercial activities that will generate substantial vehicular traffic in areas that will minimize disruptive effects on traffic circulation and adjacent land uses.
- Locate commercial and employment areas where they are accessible by public transit.
- Living areas should be developed in a system of identifiable communities, oriented to adequate, appropriate community facilities. Recreation areas, school facilities and

convenience centers should be designed to serve as social focal points in residential areas.

- Living areas should be developed in conjunction with scheduled public facility improvements. Activity centers and necessary public facilities should be developed concurrently with residential area growth.
- State and local legislation, which grants tax incentives for upgrading substandard housing, should be encouraged and utilized.
- Link living areas to community facilities, transportation facilities, employment areas, and other living areas by a continuous system of pedestrian walkways and bike trails utilizing an open space network.
- Encourage development proposals that provide privately sponsored active recreation facilities (tennis courts, swimming pools, river access) for public use in addition to public open space.

Appendix B lists the Comprehensive Changes for the Severna Park Planning Area.

During the comprehensive zoning period in March and April of 1999, 56 applications were received for changes to the existing zoning map in the Severna Park Small Plan Area. A list of these requests is located in Appendix C.

There are several areas within the Severna Park Small Planning Area that are proposed for change in land use and/or zoning. These are described below:

#### MD 2 and MD 10 Commercial Area

The Plan proposes expansion of the commercial node at MD 2 and MD 10. This area comprises approximately 17 acres and is located on the west side of Ritchie Highway, north and south of its intersection with the ramp from MD 10. The shallow lots that comprise this area and their location near major roads with noise impacts (MD 10) make commercial use in this location appropriate. Such commercial development of the site should be accomplished in a comprehensive manner rather than piecemeal development. Such development should encourage the use of natural features on that portion of the property that faces the B&A Trail to encourage pedestrian use of the commercial sites from the trail. Access to future development in this area from MD 2 should be limited to no more than one entrance at the northern and southern end of the area, in addition to an entrance opposite the connection of MD 10 to MD 2. A service road should be provided parallel to MD 2 to provide internal access to future development in this area. Extension of this service road to West Pasadena Road should also be considered to provide community access to this commercial node without using MD 2.

Anne Arundel County should research the feasibility of using the existing platted road right of ways within the interior area as part of the internal road network called for within the

Plan. This would include, but not be limited to, title search, title transfers, quit claim deeds and condemnation. The County should take the necessary steps to acquire those platted roadways that run parallel to the Baltimore and Annapolis Bike Trail and to be used as part of the internal road network and also serve as a buffer along the trail.

Further, any development occurring on these properties will adhere to the guidelines included in the Severna Park Plan in Appendix D, paying particular attention to the guidelines on pages 12-D through 15-D. These sections give specific guidance for specific signage, street scapes, lighting, pedestrian intra-connectivity, and compatible architecture. Any development on this site should be conscious of the neighborhood to the west of the Baltimore and Annapolis Bike Trail in its design.

#### Benfield Boulevard and Veterans Highway Commercial Area

The Plan proposes expansion of the commercial node at Veterans Highway and Benfield Boulevard. This area comprises approximately 16 acres and is located on the north side of Benfield Boulevard, east of Veterans Highway. Development of this area should complement future redevelopment of the Veterans Highway corridor to provide retail and office uses to residents in the west end of the Severna Park Planning Area.

Further, any development occurring on these properties will adhere to the guidelines included in the Severna Park Plan in Appendix D, paying particular attention to the guidelines on pages 12-D through 15-D. These sections give specific guidance for specific signage, street scapes, lighting, pedestrian intra-connectivity, and compatible architecture. Any development on this site should be conscious of the neighborhood to the east and offer as much buffer as possible between any development and the existing neighborhood.

#### Veterans Highway and East West Boulevard

The Plan proposes a change in zoning from residential to commercial for approximately 2 acres of the property located at the intersection of Veterans Highway and East West Boulevard in front of Shipley's Retreat. The storm water management pond, utility easement, and forest conservation easement bordering this section of the property make residential development difficult. Commercial development, as an extension of the commercial revitalization area already designated on Veteran's highway, would be possible. The site is not conducive to strip center development however, and commercial development should lean towards multiple two or three story mixed occupancy retail and office use.

#### Brightview Road

The Plan proposes a change in zoning along Brightview Road from R1 to R2. This area comprises approximately 47 acres, east of the intersection with Veterans Highway. The area directly across Brightview Road to the north is zoned R5 and R15 and is developed with single family and multifamily homes. The area to the south is zoned R2 and is developed with single family homes. The entire area is served or can be served with public sewer and water.

### Ritchie Highway and Earleigh Heights Road

The Plan proposes a change in zoning along Earleigh Heights Road and Ritchie Highway from R1 to R2. This area comprises approximately 32 acres and is located adjacent to a commercial area to the south, a church to the north and the B&A Trail to the west. The entire area is served or can be served with public sewer and water. This area is also experiencing some septic failures.

### 8391 Jumpers Hole Road

The Plan proposes a change in zoning from industrial to residential for approximately 8.07 acres of the property known as Parcel 32, and located at 8391 Jumpers Hole Road.

### 910 Ritchie Highway

The Plan proposes a change in zoning from residential to commercial for the property located adjacent to Smith Marine. As this property is bordered by Route 2, a marine facility, and a tavern, it is no longer suitable for its current R5 zoning.

### Ritchie Highway and Route 648

The Plan proposes a change in zoning from residential to commercial for the property located next to the Knights of Columbus. As this property is bordered by a communication tower and a state highway property, it is no longer suitable for its current R2 zoning.

### Severna Park Village Center

The Plan proposes a change in land use for the area identified as the Severna Park Village Center. The proposed land use classification would change from commercial use to mixed use. Rezoning to Mixed Use Commercial is not recommended until a concept plan has been prepared for this area.

The concept for revitalization of the Severna Park Village Center depends on both renovation and redevelopment through the coming years to serve the entire community with additional housing, new services, and cultural and employment opportunities. Designation of this area for mixed use will provide design and development standards for any future new development or redevelopment of the area. These standards will be used to assure that any new development or redevelopment consider and respect nearby existing land uses.

The following goals have been defined to serve as a basis for such a plan.

- Create a variety of uses within the Village Center including small commercial office uses, retail, residential, entertainment, cultural and neighborhood services.
- Improve the visual and functional characteristics of the Ritchie Highway corridor through enhanced street and tree plantings, relocation of major intersections and combining entrances to reduce individual curbcuts. Promote shared access and parking with inter-parcel connections.
- Enhance and expand the traditional village scale and character of Old Severna Park as represented at the intersection of McKinsey Road and B&A Boulevard. Redefine this area as the traditional center of the community and use as a prototype example to be followed within the overall plan. Improve architectural quality throughout the Village Center area.
- Develop improved pedestrian and bike access into and within the Village Center area. Create linkages, focal points and central landscaped open space areas.

Graphics of the Severna Park Center here. To see these images please go to the Severna Park library or you may purchase a copy of the plan at the Office of Planning and Zoning.