

X. COMMUNITY SERVICES

The South County Small Area Planning Committee recognizes and encourages the development of strong civic associations as a method of providing an on going conduit between County government and the citizens of South County. We are a community connected in part by our umbrella organizations, community associations and local places of worship.

It is important that the strong community network of organizations provide an ongoing link between the County and the citizens to ensure that information and awareness of County programs reaches the citizens and that the County is aware of our needs.

We strongly encourage the County to appoint an implementation group, which will continue after the Small Area Planning Process is complete. The committee would be charged with following up on goals and recommendations in the adopted Small Area Plan, and will also serve as strong community advocates for the facilitation of communications.

A. Parks and Recreation

Recreational facilities in South County have focused on preserving natural resources. Parks include, Jug Bay Wetlands Sanctuary, Patuxent Park, and the federally owned Smithsonian Research Center. Community centers, such as the former Nike site on Queen Anne Bridge Road, Davidsonville Family Recreation Center and the South County Recreation Center (Owensville Outreach Center) provide facilities for small meetings and classes, but are inadequate for larger gatherings. Sizeable gatherings are usually held at one of the area schools such as Southern High or Southern Middle.

Ballfields are located at Deale/Tracy's Park, Old South Park, Riverwood, and Davidsonville Park. The ballfields at Davidsonville Park will be relocated to a site along Patuxent River Road once the new Davidsonville Elementary School is built. Land for active recreation areas is being acquired at the intersection of Riva Road and 214 and in Lothian. Land along Patuxent River Road and Sands Road is being acquired, as it becomes available. Three areas that are being actively acquired are: 35 acres at Patuxent River Road and MD 50, 21 acres South of Wooton's Landing, and 100 acres along Patuxent River Road.

Recommendations

1. Conduct a comprehensive review of park and recreation needs in South County and prepare a detailed plan for meeting these needs.
2. Highest priority should be given to the already clearly established need for a community/recreation center with ballfields in the Sands Road area.
3. Jug Bay Wetlands Sanctuary is a premier natural area and education and research

resource for the County. These uses must be protected. Through additional land acquisition, expanded uses should include camping and trails open to bikes and horses.

4. Provide a multi-purpose community center at Wayson's Corner, to be used for adult and seniors programs, after school activities, and cultural arts. This community center would ideally have a facility similar to Maryland Hall for the Arts and would also include an indoor swimming pool that may be used in conjunction with Southern High School.
5. Tie a bike link trail through the area with the existing MD 4 bridge -- widen the existing bridge and have hiker, biker trails through the entire South County area.
6. Mined out sand and gravel pits on the Patuxent should be earmarked for natural areas, parks, recreation and reforestation.
7. Improve water access. Public access to the waterfront that abuts the County has long been a major concern of many residents. Additional opportunities for public access should be provided that offer a variety of activities (depending on the site) including public boat ramps, swimming areas, fishing areas, and natural resource and environmental protection areas. Access points of interest include:
 - Patuxent River and its watershed
 - Access to Herring Bay/Chesapeake Bay
 - Access to water through Deale/Shady Side
 - Access to Rhode River, West River, Chesapeake Bay
 - Access to water through Edgewater/Mayo
8. Consider easements for public access – hiking or equestrian trails, other forms of access—on some farms.

B. Housing

South County possesses a range of housing types from affordable single detached homes to elaborate real estate. Rental properties are fairly uncommon. There are no apartment complexes but some rental needs are provided through tenant houses on larger farms and the mobile home parks in Wayson's Corner and along Sands Road. These communities provide a need within the planning area because they provide housing for farm laborers, young families, and retired persons. It is feared that as land values increase in South County affordable housing will become harder to find and existing mobile home parks will convert to traditional subdivisions.

Recommendations

1. Farmers/landowners should be encouraged to maintain or rehabilitate farm labor housing. Programs that assist with the rehabilitation of such housing should given serious consideration.

2. Establish a program to provide information to low and fixed income residents on tax abatement measures and promote other opportunities to provide affordable housing to residents. Such a program could be sponsored by a South County organization or local community association in conjunction with the appropriate County agency.
3. Explore opportunities to improve the existing affordable housing stock, perhaps by pursuing a pilot project with organizations like Christmas in April or Habitat for Humanity.
4. Explore a public/private partnership to improve the affordable housing that is without basic services, such as indoor plumbing and electricity. Such a program would provide incentives for upgrading housing stock while assuring that newly improved properties were not made unaffordable to existing tenants.
5. Allow assisted living facilities, which are appropriate in scale and makeup to reflect the rural character of South County.

B. Education

Student enrollment in the South County Planning Area is comprised of students from two feeder systems, South River Feeder System and the Southern Feeder System, which are roughly delineated by census tract boundaries. Comparisons provided by the Anne Arundel County Schools shows Southern Senior High, Tracey's Elementary, and Davidsonville Elementary to exceed capacity by or before the year 2001.

School renovations, projected to be completed by 2003, are as follows:

- ◆ Construct a 400 seat permanent addition to Southern Middle School
- ◆ Expand and renovate Tracey's Elementary
- ◆ Construct a new Davidsonville Elementary School

Recommendations:

1. The school system should develop a definition and criteria for the adequate facilities regulation that accurately defines and describes what is needed for quality education and actively enforce it.
2. The Anne Arundel School system shall renovate, expand or build new schools as necessary to ensure that no school within South County is now or will be over capacity according to State guidelines.
3. Make maintenance of Southern High School a top priority.
4. Conduct a study reviewing resource allocation in the Anne Arundel school system. Access to technology and materials needs to be studied to assure equity in these areas throughout the County.

5. Make school facilities multi-use whenever practical, providing enhanced opportunities for after school activities and enhanced recreation activities, as well as providing service as community centers.
6. Encourage the Anne Arundel Community College to provide course offerings in both credit and noncredit areas offered at Southern High School or at other schools throughout South County.
7. A “Maryland Hall” type facility which provides cultural arts programs should also be considered.

C. Police, Fire, Sanitation and other Public Services

The South County Planning Area is served by a number of fire stations providing a wide range of services to the community. Only one station, Fire Company 9, is located within the planning area. Service is provided from other stations including Galesville, Riva, and Avalon Shores. The area’s county policing is covered by the Southern Police District, which includes all the area South of Parole to the southern county line. Typically there are nine county officers policing the southern district at any given time.

Recommendations

1. Promote awareness of the monthly community relations meetings held by the Southern District police community. The Police Department should be proactive in outreaching to local community associations and meeting with them.
2. Add independently staffed paramedic units to each fire station. This is especially important, as there is only one ladder truck south of the South River.
3. Enforce the Anne Arundel County Fire Department study requiring the placement of underground water storage tanks near new developments and update and review the study on a regular basis to determine the adequate size and location of these tanks.
4. Consider providing a library in Wayson’s Corner.
5. Trucks hauling materials to and from landfills should be required to prevent trash and materials from blowing out. Nonetheless, when littering occurs, the Department of Public Works should implement a roadside trash pick-up program.