

Millersville Tennis Center

Frequently Asked Questions

April 11, 2017

1. What are the planned hours of operation?

The current plan for hours of operation is 6 am to 10 or 11 pm weekdays, and 7 am to 10 pm weekends.

2. Has the County conducted an environmental impact study related to the proposed construction?

The County has secured consulting services to evaluate existing site conditions to include wetlands and forest cover, and the feasibility of locating the proposed facilities on this site with minimal or no impact to wetlands and forested areas. All local, state and federal requirements will be addressed in the design phase.

3. What about the environmental impact of the impervious surface?

During the design process, various regulatory agencies such as the Soil Conservation Service will review the amount of impervious surface and the volume of storm water runoff and dictate the necessary controls. The County must comply with all local and state storm water management requirements. By eliminating the three athletic fields the number of paved parking spaces is being reduced from 311 to 150.

4. Has there been a traffic study?

A preliminary study was conducted to assess the impact on five local intersections. Based on the original park concept plan which included both tennis and athletic fields, the level of service rating of these intersections did not decline. With the current "tennis only" concept, an updated analysis will be performed. It should be noted that the three athletic fields originally proposed would draw significantly more participants and spectators than the proposed tennis facility. As a result, the parking requirements have been reduced from 311 spaces to 150 spaces.

5. How is the county going to protect neighbors from trespassers and vandalism?

The tennis center entrance road will be gated after normal operating hours. During hours of operation, the use of the facility for tennis, walking and exercise will guard against inappropriate activities. As with any illegal activity or trespassing on public or private property, after hours, the County Police Department should be notified.

6. How will the county address noise and changes to the neighbor's viewshed?

The county plan substitutes tennis for the originally planned combination of athletic fields and tennis. With tennis, there is little or no spectator noise. The noise of the racket striking the ball and the distance that the sound travels has not been studied, however; that information can be obtained at the Annapolis High School tennis courts or any similar tennis facility. Regarding the view shed, the existing forested buffer along the property line will be maintained and additional landscaping and buffering will be included in the final design.

7. Will Pickle Ball be accommodated?

The Tennis Alliance has a well-defined program geared towards tennis - its investors have focused on that program. Pickle Ball will be evaluated by the County and The Tennis Alliance during the design phase.

8. What is the anticipated number of users on a monthly or annual basis?

The feasibility study/business plan provides statistics on the number of users. That study has been posted to the Department of Recreation and Parks website. In addition The Tennis Alliance offers the following calculation:

In year three, at which time the Tennis Center is projected to achieve standard optimum operating levels, the total player hours for September through May is 1441 per week or 6244 per month. The daily and hourly distribution varies slightly but, in general, there will be an approximate average of 15 - 20 players per hour during operating hours. This applies to the September through May time frame. Overall utilization of the Tennis Center would be similar but less from June through August with a slightly greater variance in distribution.

9. The community has a need for lacrosse fields. Why weren't they considered and what is being done to address that need?

The original concept plan for Millersville Park included two full size multipurpose (lacrosse, soccer, football) fields and a smaller practice field along with the proposed tennis facilities. If the tennis facilities were eliminated in favor of multipurpose fields, up to five fields could be constructed requiring over 400 parking spaces. The traffic after school and work, during rush hour could easily be approximately 40 vehicles per field which translates into 200 vehicles transporting children to attend 5PM games or practice. At 6:30 or 7:00PM the initial 200 cars would exit and an additional 200 vehicles would enter the site for 7PM games/practice if fields were lighted. In contrast, tennis would generate 15 to 20 cars per hour as players arrive for their reserved court time or instruction session. Based on the size of the park, the close proximity of neighbors, and existing traffic patterns, the Tennis Center is a more appropriate use of the property than athletic fields. Based on the comments received from January 12, 2017 till February 28, 2017, traffic is the number one concern. If this site is to be used for public recreation, tennis versus athletic fields appears to be the better option. The County will continue to look for a site for additional lighted athletic fields to address local needs.

10. Will the outdoor courts be lighted?

Yes, to accommodate evening play during the spring, summer and fall months, the outdoor courts will be lighted.

11. Are there any other facilities for the community?

A perimeter paved trail for walking and jogging is currently planned. Additional community facilities and amenities will be considered. It should be noted, however, that additional facilities would create higher visitation, more traffic and a need for additional parking.

12. Can the county construct a sound barrier along Route 97?

The installation of sound barriers on state highways and interstate highways are determined by state and federal highway agencies based on residential impacts. Sound barriers for Route 97 are not a local government matter.

13. Will there be a change in property values of neighboring properties?

Most of the literature on this subject indicates that parks do not have negative impacts on property values; to the contrary, some studies indicate that park facilities have a positive impact on property values. Neighbors to the B&A Trail and Quiet Waters Park had similar concerns prior

to construction, however The Department of Recreation and Parks has no record of complaints or negative publicity regarding property values after those facilities were operational.

14. Will this facility be fenced?

Yes, to deter vandalism and to make certain that the courts are used appropriately, fencing installed around the outdoor courts is planned.

15. What laws are in place that authorize the county to exempt a property from zoning and location of the proposed tennis facility within RLD zoning?

Land owned or leased and developed by the County or the Board of Education is not subject to Anne Arundel County Code, Articles 17, Subdivision and Development , and Article 18, Zoning , unless federal or state law requires compliance with these articles.

16. As requested by Senator Ed Reilly, will the Department conduct a second public meeting during the design phase, to keep the public informed and to gather their input?

Yes, the department will honor that request during the design phase.

17. What will be the term of the lease agreement?

This lease has not been negotiated; however, typical leases involving a capital investment are 20 to 30 year arrangements with allowances for renewal. It is anticipated that the County and The Tennis Alliance will have similar long term lease.

18. This property was purchased for community park purposes. How was tennis determined to be the primary use?

This property was purchased with state Program Open Space funds. Program Open Space requires that the property be used for public recreation purposes. Community parks typically include facilities such as basketball courts, tennis courts, picnic pavilions, playgrounds, exercise paths, and lighted athletic fields. The proposal for a tennis center as a public private partnership was attractive for the following reasons:

- The Tennis Alliance of Anne Arundel County presented an opportunity to provide a much needed recreation facility with a significant reduction in the taxpayer contribution.
- A tennis center versus athletic fields will generate less traffic with less impact to the neighbors and local roads.
- The central location of the Millersville site is convenient for all county players.
- The open fields allow for the construction of the proposed facility with no tree removal.
- Local, amateur tennis does not draw large crowds typical to football, soccer and lacrosse.
- Crowd noise typical to field sports will be non-existent.

19. What other sites were considered and how did Millersville become the designated site?

The Crownsville Park site on General's Highway was considered; however 11 acres was inadequate for the proposed facility. The County has no other undeveloped 20 acre sites in the central part of the County. Existing parks such as Elvaton Park were considered, however, new facilities could not be added without removing existing heavily used facilities, and displacing volunteer sports groups who currently program those facilities.

20. Who will pay the operational cost of the facility?

Under the terms of a future management agreement, The Tennis Alliance will program and manage the facility with revenue generated by user fees, and instructional fees. The Alliance is a non-profit organization - fees will be reasonable and affordable, and established at a level necessary to sustain the operation of the facility.

21. What will happen to the wildlife that currently visit or inhabit the property?

As with any development including the homes that we all occupy, habitat is lost. Attached is a map of the forest cover in the vicinity of Millersville Park including the 1760 acre Severn Run Natural Environmental Area; a state preservation area. We anticipate that any displaced wildlife will migrate to suitable habitat.

22. When does the county anticipate the start of construction?

The design will commence in April 2017 and take approximately one year. Construction funds are programmed in fiscal year 2019. Upon approval of funding, construction could start as early as November 2018.

23. What will the county do to upgrade the roads to address the increased traffic?

The preliminary traffic study indicated that five intersections in the project area would not be adversely impacted by the proposed facility. The community has asked the County to expand the traffic study to address traffic problems that occur before and after local church services and daily school hours. The updated traffic study is in progress and will be posted to the County website as soon as it is available.

24. Why has the County kept these plans a secret?

As soon as the Feasibility Study and Conceptual Plan were developed a public meeting was held to present the project to the public and the immediate community. The public meeting was advertised using display ads in the Capital Gazette newspapers for two weeks approaching the January 12th public meeting, and on multiple social media outlets. The Millersville Park project was identified in the fiscal year 2017 Capital Budget to include design funds for the tennis center. Public meetings on the 2017 Capital Budget were hosted by the Planning Advisory Board, the County Executive and the County Council.

25. How is this project funded?

The feasibility study and conceptual plan were funded with County funds. The design funds were appropriated in fiscal year 2017 shared by the County at 60% and the State at 40% using a State Program Open Space grant. The construction of the entrance road, parking, utilities, pathways and outdoor courts are programmed in fiscal year 2019 using County funds at 35% and State Program Open Space funds at 65%. The Tennis Alliance of Anne Arundel County is proposing to construct the indoor facility through private donations, grants and loans.

26. Who is the Tennis Alliance?

The Tennis Alliance of Anne Arundel County is a registered non-profit 501(c)(3) whose mission is to provide quality indoor and outdoor tennis facilities, and quality programming and instruction to all County residents. This group has been organized by representatives of different tennis groups in Anne Arundel County. Its Board of Directors all serve as volunteers. The Tennis Alliance has coordinated with Anne Arundel County to develop concepts for the Tennis Center at

Millersville Park. Both the Tennis Alliance and the County intend to enter into a lease agreement that would give the Tennis Alliance the responsibility for managing the operation of the Tennis Center facility and the programming of Tennis activities.

27. Can the County fast-track this project?

The best possible schedule is to design the project in calendar years 2017 and 2018, and construct the project starting in November of 2018.

28. Can the “landscape buffer” be outside of the paved trail/track?

Yes, currently the trail is graphically shown meandering through the wooded buffer to be aesthetically pleasing to the user. During design, the wooded buffer can be enhanced or the trail can be adjusted as to location.

29. Could the reason why so many tennis courts have disappeared over the years be lack of demand? Why build when so many courts have been under-utilized and removed?

The primary focus of the tennis center is the eight indoor courts. There is only one public indoor court remaining in Anne Arundel County to address public demand, while Howard County has 17 indoor courts and Prince Georges has 33. The private sector is no longer providing indoor courts in Anne Arundel County because indoor space is more profitable when used for fitness centers, field sports or commercial development. The former tennis barn at Severn Valley had five courts to accommodate 20 players. The synthetic turf field that displaced the tennis courts accommodates 40 or more players using the entire field, and even more participants in smaller instructional clinics. More participants yield more revenues when profit is the incentive – with the proposed Millersville tennis center, profit is not the incentive. Regarding the outdoor courts, the current need is for courts to accommodate organized league play. Each match involves two teams playing on five courts. There are multiple teams seeking tennis venues having at least five courts. Currently, only the County high schools, Saw Mill Creek Park and Truxton Park have courts in groups of five or greater. Additional outdoor courts, as proposed at Millersville will address league play, instructional play, clinics, summer camps, open play and occasional tournament play. The high school courts are only accessible after school hours, and the Annapolis High School courts and Saw Mill Creek Park are the only five court venues with lights. The Tennis Center will provide indoor and outdoor courts year round based on current program needs.

30. If the tennis center is not built, what other uses are under consideration for the site?

The recreational needs of the public, as identified in the 2013 Land Preservation Parks and Recreation Plan for the Western and Eastern Planning Areas are lighted athletic fields, indoor basketball ,volleyball and tennis courts, and/or outdoor community park facilities to include tennis courts, basketball courts, volleyball courts, athletic fields, trails, picnic pavilions, dog parks, etc.

31. Does the Department of Recreation and Parks have prior experience with public-private partnerships?

Yes, a children’s theater, an indoor ice rink, and two privately managed equestrian facilities are on county land.

32. What laws are in place that authorize the county to exempt a property from zoning and location of the proposed tennis facility within RLD zoning?

Anne Arundel County Code Article 18 (Zoning Code), Section 18-2-101 (a) Scope. This article applies to all land located in the County, except that it does not apply to land owned or leased and developed by the County or the Board of Education unless federal or state law requires compliance with this article. The provisions of this article are minimum requirements and are in addition to other requirements of law.

33. Are non-county affiliated commercial athletic facilities allowed to locate in RLD without a zoning hearing or zoning change?

No, a zoning hearing is required. Non-county affiliated commercial athletic facilities are categorized in the zoning code in an RLD District as "commercial recreational facilities." A commercial recreational facility is allowed as a special exception use which requires a public hearing as stipulated under Section 18-16-301 (a).

34. Are there limits to the definition of athletic facility in the county code? For instance, does a hiking trail fall within the same definition as a large stadium? Would a large stadium be allowed within RLD?

The terms "athletic facility" and "large stadium" are not defined in the zoning code, those terms can be interpreted based on their normally accepted definitions. Athletic is defined by Webster's dictionary as "used by athletes and facility is defined as something that is built, installed, or established to serve a particular purpose." Whereas large stadium is defined as "a large usually unroofed building with tiers of seats for spectators at sports events." Section 18-1-101 (87) defines "recreational uses, active" to mean recreational activities other than golf courses, that require special facilities, fields, or equipment, such as playgrounds, ice skating rinks, running tracks, and athletic facilities, including playing fields for athletic events, tennis courts, basketball courts, and, swimming pools. Recreational uses, active are allowed as a conditional use in the OS-Open Space District, but not in the RLD District.

35. Assuming the county has the legal authority to do so, do you think the proposed tennis facility is the most appropriate location in the county? What are the factors explaining this decision?

From a zoning perspective, the location of the proposed tennis facility is appropriate providing activities are located and are adequately buffered in a manner to shield surrounding property from the effects of noise, hazards, or other offensive conditions (e.g. lighting, hours of operation, etc.). The factors explaining this decision is based on how the zoning code allows uses of similar land use intensity in the RLD District. For example, commercial recreational facilities are allowed by SE; golf courses are a permitted use by right; schools, public charter and private academic which allows tennis courts as an accessory use is permitted as a conditional use. Zoning is a tool to implement the General Development Plan for which the goal is to provide a diverse range of accessible recreational facilities and programs to serve the needs of all County residents. Most, if not all, of the County recreational uses are located in rural land use plan categories (RA and RLD districts).