



**Small Area Plans**  
*Implementation Status Report*



## Crownsville

The Crownsville Small Area Plan (SAP) was adopted in May of 2000 and addressed goals and recommendations for economic development, land use, zoning, natural and historic resources, transportation, public utilities, community facilities and community design.

### *Vision Statement*

A long-term vision for the Crownsville Community has been developed. The essential elements include:

1. The Crownsville area is defined as a "Greenbelt" and functions as a buffer between the Parole Town Center, the Odenton Town Center, and the Crofton area.
2. The Crownsville area is to retain its rural or semi-rural character. Its rich heritage is to be preserved through protecting its extensive woodlands and natural beauty, historic sites, buildings, and roads--particularly along Generals Highway, St. Stephen's Church Road, and Severn Chapel Road.
3. Sensitive and fragile areas are to be preserved and restored, particularly sensitive wetlands and steep slopes along the Severn River and South River watershed. Both surface and ground water quality are to be protected, and a healthier Severn and South Rivers are envisioned.
4. Safe and convenient access within the community is to be assured with adequate transportation serving the needs of the people without destroying the natural character and environmental qualities. Convenient access would be provided for all segments of the population regardless of age or dependency.
5. A community center is envisioned to bring together future public facilities in a convenient location and to serve as a focal point for the Crownsville area. A complement of services, both public and quasi-public, would be provided.
6. Surplus property at Crownsville State Hospital Site would be preserved and enhanced as a major public asset to the area serving community needs through adaptive reuse.
7. Recreational opportunities would be expanded for community residents with convenient access to the water, parklands, and a greenway system including a hiker/biker trail and wildlife corridors.

In summary, Crownsville residents and business interests would assume an active role in stewardship of the land, associated waters, and the community.

### *Concept Plan*

Based on the projected vision and adopted goals for the Greater Crownsville community, a Proposed Land Use Plan has been prepared which reflects the intent of the Small Area Plan Committee and public input. It is a refinement of the Anne Arundel County 1997 General Development Plan.

Reflecting the overall land use and development patterns, key elements of the Plan include major circulation systems, both pedestrian and vehicular, as well as activity centers and linkages. Natural areas are to be preserved. Parkland and open space, along with schools and other community facilities, are important features in the overall Concept. These elements are described below with objectives to guide their implementation.



*Overall Density Pattern: Rural vs. Suburban*

The predominant semi-rural character of the Crownsville area is well established and expected to continue well into the next century. Projected development of about 1400 housing units will be accommodated at relatively low density under current zoning with no significant expansion of public utilities. Waterfront subdivisions along the Severn River are essentially built-out at suburban densities ranging from quarter acre to two acre lots. Some new development will occur in areas zoned R1 or R2 along lower Generals Highway and in the vicinity of Crownsville Road and Defense Highway. Most areas with RA (Rural Agricultural) or RLD (Residential Low Density) zoning will retain their semi-rural character and extensive forest cover through careful siting of new homes and cluster development, which is encouraged.

Some additional development of existing commercially or industrially zoned areas is anticipated with no new shopping centers. Major retail and office development will be contained in Parole Town Center.

*Circulation System: Roads and Pathways*

The Crownsville road system is essentially complete with minor upgrades envisioned for some segments and at key nodes. The traffic pattern at Dorr's Corner should be modified to separate conflicting movements, and intersection improvements or traffic circles may be considered along Generals Highway to handle a steadily increasing flow of local traffic. Commuters should be diverted to I-97 to the extent possible. The Concept Plan provides for special features at entry points from Veterans Highway, I-97/Route 32, and Parole, intended to strengthen community identity.

Scenic and historic roads in the area will be preserved in their current state with only limited widening of shoulders and other safety improvements. The Plan recommends adoption of a special program for recognition and protective measures for these unique roadways throughout the Crownsville area.

Pedestrian and bicycle access are to be encouraged within local areas where safe pathways can be provided. A key element of the Concept Plan is the South Shore Trail which will extend over 12 miles from Parole to Gambrells and Odenton. This major hiker-biker path would parallel Generals Highway, linking communities and activity centers. It is envisioned as a pedestrian spine and bikeway with future connections to older neighborhoods along the Severn River, where branch pathways can be safely provided along road shoulders or on separate right-of-way (ROW) or easements. The South Shore Trail will directly link the three elementary school sites in Crownsville and major community facilities including the golf course, County fairgrounds and State Hospital site.

*Activity Centers:*

The Concept Plan recognizes existing retail services, employment and recreational facilities in the Crownsville area as important to the fabric of the community. It also proposes to accommodate new public facilities at the Crownsville Hospital site and create a new Community Center at the junction of Route 32 and Generals Highway. The Plan should facilitate pedestrian access to local services where possible for nearby residents.

- Dorr's Corner - Assure coordinated planning for infill and redevelopment to accommodate appropriate highway-oriented commercial uses.

- **Generals Highway Business Strip** - Reinforce and upgrade local retail services in the vicinity of the Crownsville Post Office.
- **Local Crossroads Centers** - Provide for cohesive planning and site design at key locations for convenience commercial uses serving nearby neighborhoods. These typically include a gas station and small stores. (e.g. Lusby Comers and Sunrise Beach Road)
- **Local Community Centers** - Maintain desired services in Herald Harbor and Sherwood Forest as a focal point within those communities. Encourage through flexible regulations, small convenience uses in other neighborhoods to serve local needs.
- **Historic Center** - Preserve and enhance the area at Old Generals Highway and Millersville Road, including Baldwin Hall, church and school, which is a traditional focus of interest and community activity.
- **New Community Center** - The Concept Plan envisions a cluster of community facilities, centrally located at the I-97 gateway to Crownsville. This complex could include a fire station, police substation and possibly a small branch library, senior services, recreation and South Shore Trail access and ranger station.

#### *Parks and Open Space: Active and Passive Recreation; Natural Environmental Areas*

The Crownsville Concept Plan shows extensive land for natural open space and organized recreational use, comprising well over 20% of the overall area. This includes floodplains and wetland areas to be preserved in a system of stream valley parks related to watersheds of the Severn River, North River and Bacon Ridge Branch, including abutting steep slopes and buffer strips.

Active recreational use includes ball fields in Arden and Generals Highway Corridor Park, as well as the Eisenhower Golf Course. The Annapolis Waterworks site, the Bacon Ridge Natural Area, the Severn Run Environmental Areas and surplus land from the State Hospital site west of I-97 will provide for passive recreation in the future. These existing parks and natural areas are often contiguous and form Greenway systems which extend through major stream valleys or link to the Severn River. Large forested areas of the “Green Cathedral” and undeveloped land in Sherwood Forest are a major feature in the Concept Plan. Along with the South Shore Trail, that will function as kind of a linear park strip, these green areas form a pattern of open space which characterizes Crownsville as a semi-rural community.

#### *Plan Highlights*

The following are some of the key recommendations contained in the Draft Plan for the Crownsville Small Area.

#### *Economic Development*

- Using existing legal mechanisms promote the inter-generational conveyance of farming activities and provide incentives for continued farming activity.
- The rural history of the area has allowed for existing, non-conforming, locally owned businesses in residential areas which should be preserved.



- The historic economic development in Crownsville has resulted in a number of commercial loci that are collections of owner-operated businesses which serve the immediate residents. These locally owned businesses should be preserved.

### *Environment*

- Protect and preserve the following four category areas of special environmental concern:
  - Sensitive areas such as: the Severn Run; the globally rare Arden Bog and its recharge area; and other locations listed on the State Resource Inventory Map, as well as sites with endangered species as they are identified.
  - Large contiguous forested areas such as the Green Cathedral and the headwaters of the South River.
  - Critical Area: Buffer and Expanded Buffer, beach strand habitat, steep slopes, and ravine bottoms.
  - Ravine bottoms outside of the Critical Area, sensitive areas, wetlands and flood plains.
- Consider the adoption of low impact development standards, (i.e. development designs that minimize land disturbance, impervious area and encourage infiltration as detailed in the proposed State Stormwater Management Regulations and Prince George's "Low Impact Development Standards") when County codes are being revised and updated.
- Implement a system of "greenways" that will encourage the preservation of contiguous forested areas through inventory study and mapping and implement via subdivision review activities and acquisition, including easements.

### *Land Use, Zoning, Utilities and Historic Roads*

- The boundaries of Parole Town Center should not be extended into the Crownsville Small Planning Area.
- Define the entire Crownsville Small Area as a greenbelt bounded by the Parole and Odenton Town Centers and the Crofton area.
- Evaluate the Generals Highway corridor from the southern boundary of Parole Town Center through the intersection at Veterans Highway, and prepare design guidelines for the various segments to preserve historic character and / or enhance functional and aesthetic quality. Special design criteria would apply to future construction or renovation within the corridor and could be implemented through zoning and subdivision regulations.
- Remove the designation of "Revitalization Area" along Veteran's Highway, just north of Generals' Highway.
- Construct the South Shore Hiker-Biker Trail in the near-term. Adequate parking for users of the trail should be provided at convenient locations.

### *Transportation*

- Request the County Board of Education, in conjunction with the County Department of Public Works, conduct an inspection of all public schools in the Crownsville Planning Area to evaluate

current vehicle traffic and pedestrian safety and recommend enhancements necessary to improve overall safety.

- Request the County Department of Public Works, in cooperation with the State Highway Administration, conduct two studies. The first area of study is the intersection of Route 178 and Herald Harbor Road, to recommend improvements to the right turn lane that will improve the ease of access from northbound Route 178 to eastbound Herald Harbor Road. The second area of study is the intersection of Exit 5 from I-97 and Route 178, to determine the feasibility of establishing a left turn light at the intersection, to improve the safety of vehicles making left turns from the exit ramp to travel northbound on Route 178.
- Request the County Department of Public Works, in conjunction with the State Highway Administration, conduct a study of the intersections at the north end of Generals Highway with Veterans Highway to determine possible solutions to the heavy congestion problem.
- As a means to protect and preserve the scenic and historic character, designate Old Generals Highway, Old Herald Harbor Road, St. Stephens Church Road, Crownsville Road, Honeysuckle Lane, Waterbury Road, Hawkins Road, Old Epping Forest Road, Bacon Ridge Road, River Road, Chesterfield Road, Indian Landing Road, Herald Harbor Road, Sherwood Forest Road, Generals Highway, Johns Hopkins Road, and Severn Chapel Road as scenic and historic roads as set forth in Resolution No. 45-97 adopted by the County Council on November 3, 1997.
- There should be no additional interchanges, or access ramps to I-97 constructed in the Crownsville Planning Area.

### *Implementation*

Over 100 recommendations were identified within the Crownsville SAP to help implement the Vision, Plan Concept and the 1997 General Development Plan. More than 70 percent of the recommendations have been implemented, are currently in the process of being implemented or are ongoing processes and procedures that do not have a completion date.

Most notable of the recommendations that have been / are currently being implemented are various waterway or shoreline improvements, including a living shoreline protection project on Brewer Creek and restoration of Howard's Branch; various transportation improvements, including a traffic signal at the Generals Highway / Indian Landing / Millersville Road intersection; establishment of hubs of commercial land use; adoption of Scenic and Historic Road regulations and applying the designation to several roadways throughout the area; preservation of the Brewer Pond Natural Area; update of the County's Green Infrastructure network; enhanced stormwater management regulations; implementation of sections of the South Shore Hiker / Biker Trail; County acquisition of Valentine Creek natural area, the Bacon Ridge Natural Area, and the Eisenhower Golf Course; and completion of a cultural landscape study of Generals Highway.

The following table lists the goals of the Crownsville Small Area Plan, corresponding recommendations and the status of each.