

COMMUNITY FACILITIES ELEMENT

Introduction

The adequacy and capacity of public services and facilities are of the utmost importance to the quality of life for the citizens of Mardela Springs.

As the population of the Town grows during the planning period, new and improved public facilities will be needed. Population increases will generate increasing demand for education, recreation, solid waste disposal, health facilities, and other important services. These services determine, to a large extent, the potential for future growth and are critical issues if the Town is to realize its goal of a growing rural community that maintains an ideal balance between quantity of growth and quality of life.

The Community Facilities Element coordinates the projected growth of the community with the ability of the Town to provide services in accordance with the development patterns established by the Land Use Plan and the Municipal Growth Element. It is the purpose of this Element to evaluate the capacity of existing public facilities in order to determine if current needs are being met and if future growth can be properly served.

Community Facilities Goal

The overall goal of the Community Facilities Element is to provide a system of community facilities that will assure an adequate and equal level of public services to all the residents of Mardela Springs.

Existing Facilities

Sewer System

The Town of Mardela Springs does not have a public sewer system. All properties are served by on-site individual septic tanks.

The Town hired a consultant in 2009 to identify and examine various options for providing community, regional water and sewer service to all of the residents of Mardela Springs. The study included a summary of site conditions and the extent and severity of public health / environmental conditions. The study also included a description of the

various options for wastewater collection, disposal, treatment, and distribution. Design parameters and configurations for each option, as well as cost estimates were discussed. The Town is currently in the process of setting up public meetings to discuss the findings and recommendations of the study in order to determine appropriate next steps. Implementation of a first-ever community sewer system will be costly, therefore the Town is looking at this endeavor as a long-term planning project dependent upon grant and/or loan monies for full implementation.

Further discussion about the Town's existing on-site septic systems and the Town's future plans for a public sewerage facility is provided in the Water Resources and Municipal Growth Elements.

Water System

Mardela Springs does not have a public water system. All properties are served by individual on-site wells. All of the Town's water supply, including potable and non-potable water, is secured from ground water aquifers. The Town is totally dependent upon this source of water. The major aquifer used for the Town's water supply is the unconfined surface sediments of the Pliocene and Pleistocene series. The most important elements of this aquifer are the Parsonsburg Sand; Beaverdam Sand; and Red, Gravelly Sand.

The water of the Pleistocene and Pliocene series is relatively high in iron, low in chloride, very low in bicarbonate, and low in dissolved solids. The water supply is soft and slightly acidic. The raw water tends to be irony and acidic with the acidity of the water making it corrosive to piping systems. The iron content affects the taste and causes discoloration of plumbing fixtures and fabrics. However, with the advent of newer, deeper wells (300' or greater), iron is not as big of an issue as it was in the past.

As mentioned above, the Town hired a consultant in 2009 to identify and examine various options for providing community, regional water and sewer service to all of the residents of Mardela Springs. The Town is currently in the process of setting up public meetings to discuss the findings and recommendations of the study in order to determine appropriate next steps. Implementation of a first-ever community water and sewer system will be costly, therefore the Town is looking at this endeavor as a long-term planning project dependent upon grant and/or loan monies for full implementation.

Further discussion about the Town's existing on-site wells, water supply, water quality, and future plans for a public water system is provided in the Water Resources and Municipal Growth Elements.

Solid Waste

A private disposal company provides trash collection at the Town's expense. The waste is hauled to Wicomico County's Newland Park Landfill, which is located on Brick Kiln Road. In addition, a transfer station accepting household waste only is owned by the Town and located just outside of Mardela Springs in Wicomico County. The transfer station, which includes a recycling center, is open five (5) days a week; closing on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Street Lights

The Town provides lighting along most of its streets. A significant portion of the Town's budget (approximately 18%) is dedicated to paying for this lighting.

Education

Mardela Springs has no public or private schools within the Town boundary. However, Northwestern Elementary School, located on Sharptown Road, is about a mile from the Town across U.S. Route 50. Northwestern Elementary serves grades Pre-K through 5. The 26,800 square foot facility is located on 10.4 acres and has 13 classrooms, a media center, a cafeteria, and an art/music room. Four portables with single classrooms, plus one additional portable with eight classrooms, are located on the site. According to the FY2011 Wicomico County Educational Facility Master Plan (EFMP), Northwestern Elementary has a State-rated capacity of 274 pupils and the May 2010 enrollment was 294 pupils, which includes 16 Pre-K students. The overall physical condition of the school is rated as "good". Northwestern Elementary is not programmed for expansion in the current EFMP.

All Mardela Springs students in grades 6-12 attend Mardela Middle and High School, which is located on Delmar Road less than a mile from Mardela Springs across U.S. Route 50. The 87,633 square foot facility is located on 39.79 acres. According to the FY2011 Wicomico County EFMP, Mardela Middle and High School has a combined State-rated capacity of 616 students and the May 2010 enrollment was 716 students. The school has four single classroom portables and its overall physical condition is listed as "good" in the EFMP. The County

plans to add four classrooms to Mardela High by 2013 in order to deal with the overcrowding and expected increase in enrollment numbers.

Open Space, Parks, and Recreation

The 2005 Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan (LPPRP) identifies six (6) planning areas for purposes of analyzing individual recreation needs. Mardela Springs is included in the Tri-Town Planning Area along with the towns of Hebron and Sharptown and the surrounding northwestern portion of the County. The Tri-Town Planning Area comprises about 6% of the County's total population.

Open space and recreational facilities are an essential part of every community. The State of Maryland and the Program Open Space goal is to provide 30 acres of park space for every 1,000 residents and Wicomico County adopted this standard as part of its 2005 LPPRP. The parks within and around Mardela Springs are mainly "neighborhood" and "community" parks and generally only serve Mardela Springs and the surrounding local community.

If the State standard is used as the guiding principle for determining the adequacy of open space and recreational acreage, then the Town of Mardela Springs appears to meet the mark. With a 2000 population of 364 people, State standards would indicate that park acreage should total 10.92 acres and 34.3 acres is actually provided. The 34.3 acres includes the 1.80 acre Mardela Springs boat ramp and picnic area (County Serving area); the 4.0 acre Mardela Springs Park Recreation Area (Community Park); the 1.0 acre Mardela Springs tennis courts (Community Park); the 5.6 acre Northwestern Elementary School site (Neighborhood School Park); and the 21.9 acre Mardela Middle and High School facility (Community School Park). These combined acreages more than meet the State standard for parks.

Although on its face the Town may meet the parks and recreation recommended standards, it is also important, and often more telling, to consider the types of recreation being offered a community. The type of open space, parks, and facilities required for a community depends to a large degree on the composition, needs, and desires of area residents. Since the 2000 Census indicates that about 35% of the Town's population is 45 years of age or older, possibly some additional consideration should be given to providing appropriate recreational opportunities to this age group. This might include

walking, biking, and/or hiking trails; additional in-town tennis courts; and passive parks oriented more towards social interaction. Social parks could include, but not be limited to, gardens, park benches, horseshoe pits, picnic tables, and checker and chess tables.

Mardela Springs Boat Ramp and Picnic Area

The Mardela Springs Boat ramp, located on the west side of Bridge Street, south of Barren Creek is a 1.8 acre facility for launching small craft into Barren Creek a tributary of the Nanticoke River. Aside from the boat ramp, the facility provides a fishing and picnic area for area residents.

Mardela Springs Park Recreation Area

The Mardela Springs Park Recreation Area is a 4 acre, Town-owned park facility located at the North East Corner of Railroad Avenue and Station Street. This is also the location of the Mardela Springs' Town Hall.

The facility features one (1) lighted softball field and associated dugouts, one (1) multi-use field, and one (1) basket ball court. In addition the park facility includes 300 bleacher seats, playground equipment, picnic facilities, a pavilion, and a concession stand. Concessions are operated by the Mardela Springs Recreation Council, rather than the Town. Continued development of the park is supported by concession sales, as well as grants written by the Mardela Springs Recreation Council.

Since the last Comprehensive Plan update in 1997, the Recreation Council has improved the recreation facility by adding a full size basketball court and a play module; and by rehabilitating the existing swings and fencing. The Recreation Council has also planted several trees in order to provide needed shade at the facility.

The Mardela Springs Park Recreation Area annually hosts area softball and soccer leagues between the months of April and November and serves between 125 and 175 individuals. In addition, each year the Wicomico County Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism conducts a Summer Playground Program at this facility. For this Program, staff organizes games and arts and crafts while also overseeing a playground full of children. Program hours are Monday through Thursday from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM and the Program runs from mid-June to early August.

Mardela Springs Tennis Courts (outside town limits)

The Mardela Springs Tennis Courts are situated on a one (1) acre site and includes two (2) tennis courts. The facility is county-owned and is adjacent to Mardela Middle and High School.

Northwestern Elementary School (outside town limits)

There are 5.6 acres of recreational land provided at this facility owned by the Wicomico County Board of Education. Recreational amenities include one (1) multi-use field, one (1) basketball court, and playground equipment.

Mardela Middle and High School (outside town limits)

Recreation facilities are also provided at the Mardela Middle and High School. There are 21.9 acres of recreational land provided at this facility owned by the Wicomico County Board of Education. Recreational amenities include one (1) softball field, one (1) baseball field, one (1) basketball court, one (1) multi-use field, and 200 bleacher seats.

Greenways, Bikeways, and Other Linear Corridors

According to the 2005 Wicomico County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan (LPPRP), the Wicomico County Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism continues to develop greenways, bike trails, and other linear corridors to blend the current popularity of trails with recreation, heritage tourism, and resource preservation.

The linear corridor system is based on hubs and spurs. Hub locations are unique destinations that are staffed during normal working hours. Spurs are points of orientation and local resources that can serve as a starting point for driving, biking, hiking, paddling, or other leisure activity. The linear corridor system in Wicomico County uses roads, river and stream corridors, and other existing assets to connect hubs and spurs. The Mardela Springs boat ramp and picnic area on Barren Creek is listed as a "spur" in Wicomico County's 2005 LPPRP.

Heritage Tourism

The 2005 Wicomico County LPPRP lists the Adkins Historical and Museum Complex in Mardela Springs, as well as the Town of Mardela

Springs, as significant heritage tourism destinations in the County. Additionally, the Westside Historical Society is a non-profit organization in Mardela Springs that operates the Barren Creek Heritage Museum on Main Street and also owns and maintains the Barren Creek Presbyterian Church and the Barren Creek Spring House.

The Town of Mardela Springs is included in the boundary of the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area. This status recognizes Mardela Springs' unique heritage and offers the Town an opportunity for coordinated and enhanced tourism activity. Consequently, the "Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area Management Plan", dated 2003, and as may be amended from time to time, is hereby incorporated, by reference, in the Town of Mardela Springs' Comprehensive Plan.

Green Infrastructure

Green Infrastructure, as identified by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR), includes the forests, wetlands, and other natural lands throughout the State that provide many services to the ecosystem, such as cleaning the air, filtering and cooling water, storing and cycling nutrients, conserving and generating soils, pollinating crops and other plants, regulating climate, sequestering carbon, protecting areas against storm and flood damage, and maintaining aquifers and streams.

The Green Infrastructure system is composed of hubs (large, unbroken expanses of 250 acres or more of natural land vital to the State's unique ecology) and corridors (habitat highways that allow for the movement of animals, plant seeds, water, and other important natural processes between hubs).

The Maryland Green Infrastructure Map captures about 2.4 million acres, or 38 percent of the State's land area. Currently, about 27 percent of the network is protected via preservation easements, funded largely through Program Open Space.

Hubs, corridors, and, at a finer scale, parcels, are evaluated and ranked for their ecological value. The DNR has adopted Green Infrastructure priorities as a guide to focus land conservation efforts. High-ranking hubs have been combined with new assessments of rare species habitats, hotspots of aquatic biodiversity, and watershed lands important for protecting Bay water quality to identify "Targeted Ecological Areas". "Targeted Ecological Areas" are lands and

watersheds of high ecological value that have been identified as conservation priorities by DNR.

The Green Infrastructure system in Wicomico County includes 26 hubs, as identified by DNR. Hubs with a "composite ecological percentile" below 10 indicate those hubs with a greater ecological sensitivity. Ten of the 26 hubs identified in Wicomico County have a composite ecological percentile below 10; two of which border the Town of Mardela Springs. Hub #505 borders the Town on the south and west and has a percentile of "0" representing the greatest ecological sensitivity. Hub #485 borders the Town to the north and has a percentile of "2" representing the second highest level of ecological sensitivity. Portions of Hubs #505 and #485 which border Mardela Springs are shown as "Protected Targeted Ecological Areas" on Map #8.

GreenPrint

The State of Maryland's GreenPrint initiative provides the vision and tools needed to achieve ecological land conservation priorities. GreenPrint is an online resource that uses mapping technology and performance measures to show where our "Targeted Ecological Areas" occur and how Maryland's land conservation programs are working to protect these lands. Map #8 indicates two "Protected Targeted Ecological Areas" within the corporate limits of Mardela Springs - the Mardela Springs Park Recreation Area and the Mardela Springs Boat Ramp and Picnic Area.

Fire Protection

The Mardela Springs Volunteer Fire Department (Wicomico County Station #9) provides fire protection for the Town and its immediate surroundings. The firehouse is located on Station Street, south of Railroad Avenue.

This all-volunteer force is comprised of approximately 48 members, 42 of which are active fire fighters with the remainder serving as either exempt or honorary members. The company's fire-fighting equipment currently consists of two Class A engines, two tankers, one brush truck, and one utility chase vehicle. One engine carries automotive and light industrial extrication equipment. With ladders, current equipment allows the company to handle fires in 2½ story buildings. Automatic mutual aid has been established with the Sharptown Volunteer Fire Company for a Class A engine and an aerial truck for

structure fires. This same type of mutual aid exists with the Hebron Volunteer Fire Company for use of a Class A engine for structure fires within the corporate limits and for paramedic service.

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) is currently provided by a Basic and Advanced Life Support ambulance service. An Advanced Life Support Paramedic staffed ambulance is mutually assigned to both Hebron and Mardela Springs, providing 24 hour coverage. In addition, the Mardela Springs Volunteer Fire Department carries medical assistance equipment on the utility chase vehicle and has approximately ten (10) emergency medical technicians and three (3) volunteer paramedics within its membership.

The Mardela Springs Volunteer Fire Department initially responds to any hazardous materials incidents, followed by a hazardous materials team being automatically dispatched from Wicomico County Emergency Response.

Police Protection

Mardela Springs does not have its own police force. The Wicomico County Sheriff's Office and the Maryland State Police provide police protection within the corporate limits of the Town.

Medical Facilities

There are no doctor or dentist offices, or other types of medical facilities in Mardela Springs. The nearest medical offices or facilities are located in Salisbury. The closest hospital is in Salisbury, about 12 miles east of the Town.

Post Office

The Town has a post office located on the north side of Railroad Avenue. Generally, there is no mail delivery in Mardela Springs. Town residents must visit the post office to pick up their mail. Off-street parking is provided. The post office has 3 full-time and 1 part-time employees.

Town Hall

The Town Hall is located at the corner of Railroad Avenue and Station Street and consists of a 1,153 square foot building that was built in

1960. The Town employs a part-time Town Clerk and a part-time Code Enforcement Officer.

Churches

There are currently four churches in Mardela Springs; including The Wesleyan Church of Mardela Springs, First Baptist, Emmanuel United Methodist Church, and Barren Creek Presbyterian. Barren Creek is only used for special events.

Clubs and Organizations

There are several civic organizations in Town. Among these are the Westside Historical Society, Adkins Historical Museum Complex, Mardela Springs Volunteer Fire Department Ladies Auxiliary, and Masonic Lodge.

Community Facilities Objectives

To guide the upgrading and improvement of the Town's community facilities in a manner consistent with the Land Use Plan and the Municipal Growth Element, the following objectives are established:

- (1) To provide for the adequate and orderly expansion of public facilities and services in a manner commensurate with local financial resources and capabilities.
- (2) To continue to utilize services provided by the County and State to avoid duplication and reduce Town costs.
- (3) To utilize grant and loan programs to improve facilities, provided the cost of applying for the funds and meeting the funding criteria do not outweigh the benefits received.
- (4) To closely coordinate the provision of services with location and timing of new development.
- (5) To promote new development in such a way that services can be logically expanded.
- (6) To assure the provision of community services and facilities in a manner which is least disruptive to the environment.

- (7) To encourage use of public lands and buildings for a variety of public uses.

Community Facilities Policies

The following policies define the Town of Mardela Springs' position on the provision of community facilities and services:

- (1) The location, timing, and pace of new development shall be compatible with the Town's ability to secure capital funds to provide and maintain all community facilities.
- (2) The Town will review its Comprehensive Plan, relevant sections of Wicomico County's Water and Sewerage Plan, and existing Town infrastructure to identify community facilities that need to be improved, upgraded, extended, or expanded. Priorities will be established according to need and to the recommendations of the Plan, provided the projected cost is economically feasible in the Town's Capital Improvements Program.
- (3) Development requests will be reviewed for adequacy of public services and infrastructure. Approvals may be deferred, phased in, or conditioned upon the availability of adequate infrastructure.
- (4) Developer funded and constructed infrastructure shall meet Town standards and be inspected and approved by the Town; or constructed to County standards and inspected and approved by the County should a cooperative infrastructure agreement exist between Wicomico County and Mardela Springs.
- (5) Adequate performance bonds shall be a part of all development approvals requiring new public infrastructure.
- (6) Whenever feasible, the Town should pool resources for capital projects with federal, State, or County government.
- (7) The Town shall properly maintain community facilities under its jurisdiction.

Community Facilities Standards & Recommendations

The standards and recommendations for the Community Facilities Element are grouped according to the type of facility.

Sewer System Recommendations

- (1) The Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene acknowledge that a potential health hazard exists within the Mardela Springs sewer service area due to failing septic systems. As such, the Town should utilize the recently completed community water and sewer feasibility study and work with its citizens, Wicomico County, and the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) to identify the most appropriate type of sewer system for Mardela Springs.
- (2) The Town, once a sewer system type has been agreed upon, should work with Wicomico County and MDE to identify potential funding sources to implement the community sewer system in a way that is least burdensome, from a cost perspective, to the Town and its residents.
- (3) The Town should share the results of the feasibility study with both Wicomico County and MDE and work toward mutually beneficial goals with respect to wastewater treatment in Mardela Springs for the planning period of this document.

Water System Recommendations

- (1) The Town has a shallow well system coupled with failing septic systems. As such, the Town should utilize the recently completed community water and sewer feasibility study and work with its citizens, Wicomico County, and the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) to identify the most appropriate type of centralized water system for Mardela Springs.
- (2) The Town, once a water system has been agreed upon, should work with Wicomico County and MDE to identify potential funding sources to implement a centralized water system in a way that is least burdensome, from a cost perspective, to the Town and its residents.

- (3) The Town should share the results of the feasibility study with both Wicomico County and MDE and work toward mutually beneficial goals with respect to a centralized water system in Mardela Springs for the planning period of this document.
- (4) In order to protect the existing groundwater resource, the Town will require appropriate environmental review in the development approval process.

Street Light Recommendations

- (1) The Town should ensure that existing and proposed street lighting is aesthetically compatible with the village character of Mardela Springs.
- (2) The Town should require all new developments to provide streetlights and the cost and installation of the lights should be borne by the developer.
- (3) The Town should explore possible funding mechanisms to help alleviate the sizeable expense incurred by the Town for the operation and maintenance of streetlights.

Solid Waste Recommendation

- (1) The current trash collection system is sufficiently adequate; therefore no recommendations are suggested at this time.

Education Recommendations

- (1) The Wicomico County FY2011 EFMP states there are no programmed improvements for the expansion of Northwestern Elementary School.
- (2) The Wicomico County FY2011 EFMP states, due to overcrowding and increased enrollments, the County plans to add four classrooms to Mardela High by 2013.
- (3) The Town should continue to consult and work with the County on future growth plans and development projects in order to help to determine potential impacts on the area school system.

Open Space, Parks, and Recreation Recommendations

- (1) The Town should consider a needs-based approach via town meetings or a community survey to better determine the recreational desires of the residents of the Town.
- (2) The Town should consider the needs of handicapped citizens and make certain there are adequate recreational opportunities available for their benefit.
- (3) The Town should encourage the County to continue to renew existing joint-use agreements with the Board of Education to enable the continued public use of school recreational facilities.
- (4) The Town should coordinate with the County to continue to develop opportunities for expansion of the existing linear corridor system based upon "hubs" and "spurs".
- (5) The Town should work with the County to expand upon existing scenic byways and bikeways to include Mardela Springs and the surrounding rural area.
- (6) The Town should continue to pursue heritage tourism opportunities both in cooperation with, and independent of, its inclusion in the Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area Management Plan.
- (7) The Town should continue to work with the County to identify and obtain funding for open space and recreational projects in the Town.
- (8) New developments should be required to provide recreational areas and/or trail systems as part of the development approval process.
- (9) The Town should continue to work with the County to promote the Adkins Historical and Museum Complex in Mardela Springs, as well as the Town of Mardela Springs, as a tourism destination.
- (10) The Town should continue to support and promote the Westside Historical Society as a heritage tourism opportunity and should coordinate with the County to get the appropriate

recognition of this non-profit's local preservation efforts in the County's LPPRP.

- (11) The Town should work with the County and the State to help preserve the State's Green Infrastructure system, especially given that two of the most sensitive hubs border the Town.

Fire Protection Recommendations

- (1) The Town and Fire Company should work closely together to make sure the Fire Company's need for water can be met both now and in the future. As new areas are developed, the Fire Company should be consulted in any plans for new fire hydrants, water storage facilities, and increased water pressure in lines.
- (2) If a business or industry using large amounts of flammable substances proposes to locate in the Town, the Fire Company should be consulted and provided ample opportunity to comment on its ability to provide fire protection for such businesses or the need of the business to provide special safety features.
- (3) Since the existing fire-fighting equipment is designed to serve buildings no greater than 2½ stories, zoning height restrictions should prohibit taller buildings until such time as the Fire Company acquires additional equipment, or unless the proposed building is designed with special fire suppression features.

Police Protection Recommendation

- (1) Although, at this time, crime is not a significant issue for Mardela Springs, Town officials should continue to meet with the Sheriff on a regular basis in an effort to implement fulltime staffing of the Mardela Springs sub-station by Wicomico County Sheriff's Department personnel.

Medical Facilities Recommendation

- (1) The Town should consider working with an area physician or the County Health Department to schedule periodic clinics to provide health services to area residents; especially to serve the Town's low-income, elderly, and handicapped population.

This effort could be combined with the needs of nearby Sharptown and Hebron residents to set up a part-time clinic to serve the residents of all three towns.

Post Office Recommendation

- (1) To help maintain the existing village environment, the Town should encourage the continued use of post office boxes for mail pick-up, rather than initiate mail delivery service. The daily post office visit in a small community is as much a social experience as it is a necessary part of each citizen's daily routine.

Town Hall Recommendations

- (1) The Town should identify possible funding sources to assist with any future renovation and/or expansion plans for Town Hall, so it can continue to serve the needs of the community.
- (2) The Town should consider the possibility of hiring one or more full-time staff to handle matters such as zoning, code enforcement, and Town revenues and expenditures.

Churches, Clubs, and Organizations Recommendation

- (1) No recommendations are suggested at this time.