

CHAPTER 4 - COMMUNITY FACILITIES ELEMENT

Introduction

The "Community Facilities Element" in the Comprehensive Plan addresses supply and demand for community facilities and services, including streets, sidewalks, water, sewer, storm drainage systems, emergency medical, police, fire protection, etc. This Comprehensive Plan element examines existing conditions and establishes Town policies for community facilities and services most directly affected by population growth. It recommends actions the Town should take to ensure an appropriate level of investment in facilities and services that meet the needs of existing and future populations and support economic development.

Goals and Objectives

Goal

Provide adequate community facilities and services required to maintain the health, safety, and welfare of the residents of Denton.

Objectives

- Maintain and expand needed public facilities and services commensurate with demand for services and financial capabilities.
- Serve all areas of the Town with adequate and affordable public services and facilities.
- Assure the provision of community services and facilities in a manner that is the least disruptive to the environment.

Town Services

Community facilities serving Denton are shown on Map 4-1. The facilities and services described in this section are primarily a Town community facility responsibility.

Sewer

The Denton wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) can treat 0.80 million gallons per day (mgd). The WWTP utilizes enhanced nutrient removal (ENR) capabilities and is designed for a peak daily flow of 2.67 million gallons. The plant operates at a three-year rolling average of 478,794 gallons per day (gpd), about 60% of the design capacity⁵. The WWTP can treat an additional 321,206 gpd of sewer based on this average. This estimate of remaining capacity includes committed but not used sewer allocations.

⁵ Town of Denton, Flow Allocation -12/31/2021

Water

Denton's water system comprises potable water wells, treatment, storage, and distribution facilities. Source water is taken from wells in the Piney Point Aquifer. In addition, Denton has three water storage tanks and water treatment facilities. One water storage tank has a storage capacity of 100,000 gallons, and two tanks have a storage capacity of 300,000.

The water system capacity is 720,000 gallons per day (gpd smallest well running 24 hours), and a withdrawal capacity of 620,000 gpd is permitted. The average flow for the last three years is 334,739 gpd for the water system, or approximately 54 percent permitted withdrawal.

The Town must treat water and sewer facilities as an enterprise fund. Therefore, charges must reflect capital, operation, and maintenance costs. The Town assesses water and sewer connection charges and capacity fees for any new development. Also, as part of any annexation, the Town requires the capital cost for water and sewer extensions and/or service upgrades necessitated by the development to be paid for by the property owner.

Administrative Offices

The 9,876 square foot facility at the southwest corner of North Second and Market streets houses Town administrative offices, including meeting space, administrative, planning, codes, and finance functions. Administrative staff manages the activities of the Mayor and Council. The Finance Department establishes and implements the financial policies and procedures of the Town, invests funds, and handles the deposits and payments of Town revenues and expenditures. Planning and Codes are responsible for development review, inspections, and enforcement of land development and building codes. Staff also manage the work of the Denton Planning Commission, Historic and Architectural Review Commission, and the Board of Appeals.

Public Works

The Public Works Department provides many essential Town services by establishing, maintaining, and operating the Town's infrastructure and facilities. The Department of Public Works' main facility is on the WWTP site at 650 Legion Road and 504 Choptank Avenue.

Town Police Department

The Denton Police Department staff includes fourteen sworn Police Officers and two civilian Administrative Aides. The administrative division consists of two sworn officers and two administrative staff, one sworn officer in criminal investigations, and eleven sworn patrol personnel. Housed in a facility located at the northeast corner of Third and Gay Street, the Department patrols the Town and answers calls for service 24 hours daily.

Solid Waste Collection and Disposal

A private waste hauler collects solid waste from Denton residences, businesses, and industries. Solid waste disposal occurs at the Mid-Shore II Regional Landfill in Caroline County.

The Mid-Shore Regional Recycling Program Recycling (MRRP) The MRRP, formed in 1993, is a cooperative partnership between Caroline, Kent, Queen Anne's, and Talbot Counties that provides free recycling services to residents of the four counties. The Caroline County Public Works Department coordinates the program for municipalities in Caroline County. Curbside pickup is available to residents of Denton, but it is limited to yard waste and bulky items only. The Denton Plaza on Route 404 is a 24-hour drop-off facility and accepts newspaper, mixed paper, aluminum cans, glass, aluminum, steel cans, plastic bottles, and high-grade office paper. MES provides the containers at Denton Plaza.

The Town provides Cardboard pick up for Town Residents as part of the curbside pickups, including bulk items, branches for chipping, and bagged yard waste if they call it into the Town office by Noon on Tuesday. The Town also provides leaf pick up in the spring and late fall as long as it is called into the Town office.

County Services

Emergency Management

The Caroline County Emergency Operations Center, located at 403 South Seventh Street, is responsible for emergency planning and coordination for the county. The Center provides emergency planning and coordination, natural disaster relief, and 911 system management. The agency also provides police communications for the Sheriff's Department and five town police departments and fire and rescue units for eight Fire/EMS-Medical Departments and manages the National Crimes Information Computer System for police agencies.

In addition to communications, the Center is responsible for the development and maintenance of the countywide Emergency Operations Plan and all related emergency/disaster preparedness functions, including writing and updating all-hazards emergency plans, shelter, and mass care plans, evacuation procedures, mutual aid agreements, and grant projects for response and recovery efforts. The Center also manages the State Fire Aid Program.

Caroline County EMS operations are housed in the County facility located at 9391 Double Hills Road. The Sheriff's Department is located at 9305 Double Hills Road on the County-owned 70-acre parcel just south of Denton. The site is an identified growth area planned for annexation.

Emergency Medical and Advanced Life Support Services

The Caroline County Department of Emergency Medical Services augments the 24-hour essential life support (EMS) service provided by the County's eight volunteer fire companies. In addition, it is the County's primary provider of advanced life support (ALS) services.

Denton Volunteer Fire Company, Basic Life Support members respond to calls within the Company's first-due response area and provide supplemental support to services of second and third-due response areas. In addition, because employment responsibilities prevent many volunteers from responding to daytime calls, the EMS Department provides trained ambulance crews during the day to ensure adequate coverage for the Town.

Caroline County operates an Advanced Life Support System (ALS), providing immediate medical attention to victims and transport to Easton, Maryland, and Seaford, Delaware, hospital facilities. ALS services are provided on a 24-hour basis by trained and certified ALS staff. In addition, the University of Maryland, Shore Health, owns and operates a diagnostic lab on Blades Farm Road.

The EMS Department regularly monitors the level of service provided by ambulance and ALS crews to ensure that adequate personnel are in place 24 hours a day to serve the emergency medical needs of the entire County. The Department also reviews population projections to anticipate types and rates of emergency service needs in response to population and demographic characteristics (elderly, special needs, etc.). An ambulance crew operating at optimum capacity can respond to 100 percent of the calls in its first-due area. The Department recommends adding an ambulance within the first-due response area when coverage falls to 50 percent (with the remaining 50 percent of the calls answered by nearby second-due ambulances).

Medical Facilities

The Choptank Community Health System, Inc. (CCHS), a private, non-profit community health center, provides primary health care services in Caroline, Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne's, Talbot Counties, and the surrounding areas at 808 South Fifth Avenue. Services include primary care, pediatrics, behavioral health, medical-assisted treatment, urgent care, and non-urgent follow-up. Patients needing hospital care are referred to the University of Maryland Medical Center in Easton.

Library

The Denton Branch of the Caroline County Public Library is a 20,338-square-foot facility located at 100 Market Street. The facility serves as the central facility for the library system for Caroline County. In addition to reading and lending materials, the library provides public access to the Internet and meeting rooms. According to the 2010 Denton Comprehensive Plan, the library branch in Denton has a service area classification of 30,000 residents.

Schools

Three public schools currently serve Denton. The public schools are:

- Denton Elementary School, located on the +/-20-acre Sharp Road site, serves pre-kindergarten through 5th grade. According to the Facilities Master Plan, this facility has a State Rated Capacity (SRC) of 736 students. As of May 2021, enrollment was 601, or 82 percent of SRC. Enrollment is projected to increase to 691 by 2031, 94 percent of SRC.

- Lockerman Middle School, situated on 18.78 acres at 410 Lockerman Street, serves grades 6 through 8. According to the Facilities Master Plan, this facility has a State Rated Capacity (SRC) of 945 students. As of May 2021, enrollment was 895, or 94 percent of SRC. Enrollment is projected to increase to 929 by 2031, 98 percent of SRC.
- North Caroline High School occupies approximately 50 acres on Central Avenue (west of and outside Denton's corporate limits). This school serves grades 9 through 12 and includes a career and technology center. According to the Facilities Master Plan, this facility has a State Rated Capacity (SRC) of 1,263 students. As of May 2021, 1,164 or 932 percent of SRC were enrolled. Enrollment is projected to decrease to 1,112 by 2031, about 883 percent of SRC.⁶

The School Master Plan includes a Facilities Needs Summary that lists the following planned improvements to address projected needs:

- renovation and addition to the Denton Elementary School;
- the partial renovation of the Lockerman Middle School, and
- addition to North Caroline High School.

Parks and Open Space

As part of its mandate for the residents' health, safety, and welfare, Denton wants to provide adequate parks, recreation areas, and open space opportunities equitably distributed throughout the Town for existing and future residents. Addressing the community's park and open space needs is a shared responsibility that includes federal, state, county, and municipal agencies, and sometimes the private sector. For this reason, the Town will continue to partner with Federal, State, County, and private organizations where appropriate to ensure its objectives are realized most efficiently and effectively.

Inventory

Including County and municipal parkland and park facilities provided on Board of Education land, approximately 116 acres of parkland, about 24 acres per 1,000 people, are available to Denton residents (see Map 4-2).

⁶ Source: 2021 Educational Facilities Master Plan, Caroline County Public Schools, Caroline County Board of Education, Revised May 2021

County and Municipal Land

This category includes recreation land actively developed for public use and resource land currently unimproved but reserved for future development and use for public recreation. Included in this category are the following:

- Towers Park - a 7.16-acre natural area located off Fifth Street in the southern portion of the Town. The local Boy Scout Troop frequently uses this wooded site.
- Sharp Road Park – an approximately 24-acre community park, is included in this category. The park includes a multipurpose field, basketball court, public bathrooms, and parking. The Park Playing surfaces have been leveled and seeded to create several Practice Fields for local Sporting Organizations. In addition, a walking trail was installed along the park's perimeter in late 2019.
- Wheeler Park – a 3.77-acre Town-owned community park located on the west side of Lockerman Street. Park facilities include tennis courts and a picnic pavilion.
- James Coursey Sr. Memorial Park - a quasi-public neighborhood park and playground for the residents of the adjacent housing project. The site is owned and maintained by the Rural Housing Association. The park, previously named North Park, expanded after the Town acquired additional land in 1995.
- Fourth Street Park - a 1.34-acre facility owned and maintained by the Town of Denton and located next to the Armory. Facilities include a children's playground, with tot lot facilities and tennis courts.
- General James F. Fretterd Community Center (Denton Armory - This Community Center, formerly the National Guard Armory, serves as staff headquarters for the Caroline County Department of Recreation and Parks. Facilities include three multipurpose rooms, one conference room, and a gym. In addition, the facility shares parking with St. Luke's United Methodist Church.
- Daniel Crouse Memorial Park – This town-owned facility encompasses approximately 49 acres and includes a visitor center, meeting facilities, two boat launch ramps, a picnic pavilion, shoreline access for public fishing, and walking trails along the natural shoreline. In addition, the site has the potential to develop supportive private facilities, e.g., a waterfront restaurant.
- Caroline County Courthouse – The grounds provide public space for various community programs and public assemblies, often produced or coordinated by the Caroline County Department of Recreation and Parks. Events held on the Courthouse grounds include

Shakespeare in the Park, the annual holiday Lighting of the Green, and Summerfest. In addition, the grounds include wayfinding signs associated with the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad trail, a Tourism Information Kiosk open 24-7, and shaded picnic tables.

Board of Education Land

Some facilities on school grounds are available for public use for programs operated or coordinated by the Caroline County Department of Recreation and Parks when the schools do not need them. The facilities include the grounds of the County's Lockerman Middle and Denton Elementary schools. In addition, under a continuing partnership between the Department of Recreation and Parks and the Caroline County Public Schools (CCPS), indoor recreation programming is provided at the Lockerman Middle School.

- Lockerman School Park - a 9.2-acre community park located on the grounds of Lockerman Middle School and owned by the Caroline County Board of Education. Facilities include a baseball field, running track, and soccer field.
- Lockerman Middle School and Lockerman Middle School running track. The Lockerman School Park is located across the street next to Wheeler Park.
- Denton School Park - a 6.67-acre community area co-located with Denton Elementary School. Facilities include a hard surface area, two ball fields, a nature trail, a playground, and a soccer field.

State and Private/quasi-public land

Recreation lands include State parks and private land offering public access. Resource lands are those whose primary objective is natural resource protection. Although public recreation is valuable to these properties, that use is secondary to the needs of wildlife and natural resources that the land protects. The category includes Martinak State Park, Camp Mardela, and the Denton Lion Club Park.

- Martinak State Park - The 105-acre park on the Choptank River includes hiking trails, camping areas, picnic pavilions, an amphitheater, a boat ramp, and a ball field.
- Camp Mardela - A privately owned facility that provides group camping, cabin, and conference facilities.
- Denton Lions Club – This 9.5-acre facility on Maryland Avenue includes a Little League baseball field.

Need Assessment

As crucial as park and recreation facilities are to the community, making them accessible to all, including by non-motorized means, i.e., walking and bicycling, are equally important. In addition, pedestrian connections to mini-parks and neighborhood parks are essential to the purpose of these facilities.

The sidewalk systems are extensive within the older developed portions of Denton, west of MD 404, providing access to the 4th Street neighborhood park and the Sharp Road community park. East of MD 404, pedestrian access is provided to open space areas within developments like Savannah Overlook and Mallard Landing. However, using national guidelines to measure service levels, neighborhood park facilities serving this area are needed (see Map 4-2). This deficiency will become more pronounced when the DiDonato property (formerly known as the Vineyards) is developed. At least one neighborhood park is already needed east of MD 404 to serve existing and future developments. A second may be required when the Gannon parcel (Village at Watts Creek) develops.

The 4th Street Park meets some of the neighborhood park criteria but cannot fully function as a neighborhood park due to the limited land area, slightly more than an acre. Therefore, additional neighborhood park facilities serving the older Denton neighborhoods west of MD 404 should be considered.

The Denton Zoning Code establishes a minimum open space requirement for all residential developments, ranging from 15 percent of the net site area for conventional residential subdivisions to 25 percent for planned developments. The Planning Commission may permit a fee instead of the dedication of common open space when the applicant cannot adequately meet the open space requirements or if the proposed development is for less than 20 lots or units. Together with the park impact fees that the Town assesses for each residential unit, these in-lieu fees should be allocated to land acquisition and facility development where needed.

Park Equity

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources “Park Equity Analysis” identifies parkland needs based on four factors:

- Concentration of children under the age of 17;
- Concentration of older adults;
- Concentration of the population with incomes below the poverty threshold and
- Population density.

The results of the analysis of Denton are as follows:

- Denton lacks public parks in the growth area on the east side of MD Route 404.
- A neighborhood park will benefit this area if additional subdivisions develop east of Route 404. Effective use of subdivision open space could address the need. However, current trends in new residential development do not indicate that there will be significant growth in the need in this area over the next 5–10 years.
- Public recreation facilities in northwest Denton are limited in scope. However, the population density and subsidized housing make pedestrian access to recreation facilities essential for this area.

Other Services

Fire Department

Volunteer organizations provide fire protection with assistance from the financial assistance provided by Caroline County and the municipalities. The Denton Volunteer Fire Department (DVFD), housed in a 15,060-square-foot facility at 400 South Fifth Street, provides fire protection for the Town and surrounding area. The Fire Department serves a population of approximately 6,200 and 2,300 households. Its service area encompasses approximately 70 square miles and 3,500 improved properties valued at over \$925 million. The Denton Volunteer Fire Department currently consists of 40 volunteer firefighters and 10 volunteer non-firefighters. According to the DVFD web page, the fire department responded to 183 fire incidences in 2018.⁷ DVFD equipment includes an incident command unit, brush truck, ambulance, two engines, rescue, and tower vehicles.

Other Community Facilities

Caroline County Health Department

The Caroline County Health Department, located at 403 South Seventh Street, the local office of the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, is responsible for infectious disease prevention, wellness promotion, and environmental protection for the County. The Department operates ten programs concerned with addictions, developmental disabilities, health education and vital statistics, adult health and geriatrics, child health, infectious disease control, the environment, maternity and family planning, mental health, and wellness promotion.

⁷ <https://www.dentonvfc.com/>

Courts for Caroline County

The Circuit Court for Caroline County operates from the Court House at 109 Market Street. Circuit Courts are where jury trials are held. The Circuit Court generally handles more serious criminal cases and major civil cases. These include juvenile and other family law cases such as divorce, custody, and child support. In addition, the Circuit Court hears most cases appealed sent from the District Court, orphans' courts, and some administrative agencies. Circuit Courts also hear domestic violence cases.

The District Court of Maryland for Caroline County is at 207 S. Third Street, Denton. The District Court hears landlord/tenant cases, replevin actions, traffic violations, criminal cases classified as misdemeanors and certain felonies, and civil cases for \$30,000 or less. The District Court does not conduct jury trials.

County Administration

The Court House on Market Street is the location of the County administrative offices for the County Commissioners, and the Health and Public Services Building located at 403 South Seventh Street houses other county offices.

The Caroline County Department of Public Works is at 520 Wilmuth Street in Denton. Services here include administration, central shops, roads, and special services. Special services include Mosquito Control, Noxious Weed Control, Gypsy Moth Control, Recycling, Building Maintenance, and Solid Waste.

The Caroline County Soil Conservation District is at 9194 Legion Road in Denton. The Caroline Soil Conservation District serves a predominantly agricultural region. Farming operations include dairy, swine, beef, and the growing poultry industry.

Caroline County Department of Corrections

Located at 101 Gay Street, the Caroline County Detention Center houses facilities for the detention and confinement of pre-trial detainees and adjudicated offenders in a safe and secure institution.

County and State Police

The Caroline County Sheriff's Department offices are at 9305 Double Hills Road. The Sheriff's Office includes administration, patrol, criminal investigations, narcotics, canine, Court Security, Civil Process, Teen Court, and Records. In addition, the State Multi-Service Center at 207 South Third Street houses the Maryland State Police facilities for Caroline County.

Community Facilities Policies

The following policies shall apply to the provision of community facilities within Denton:

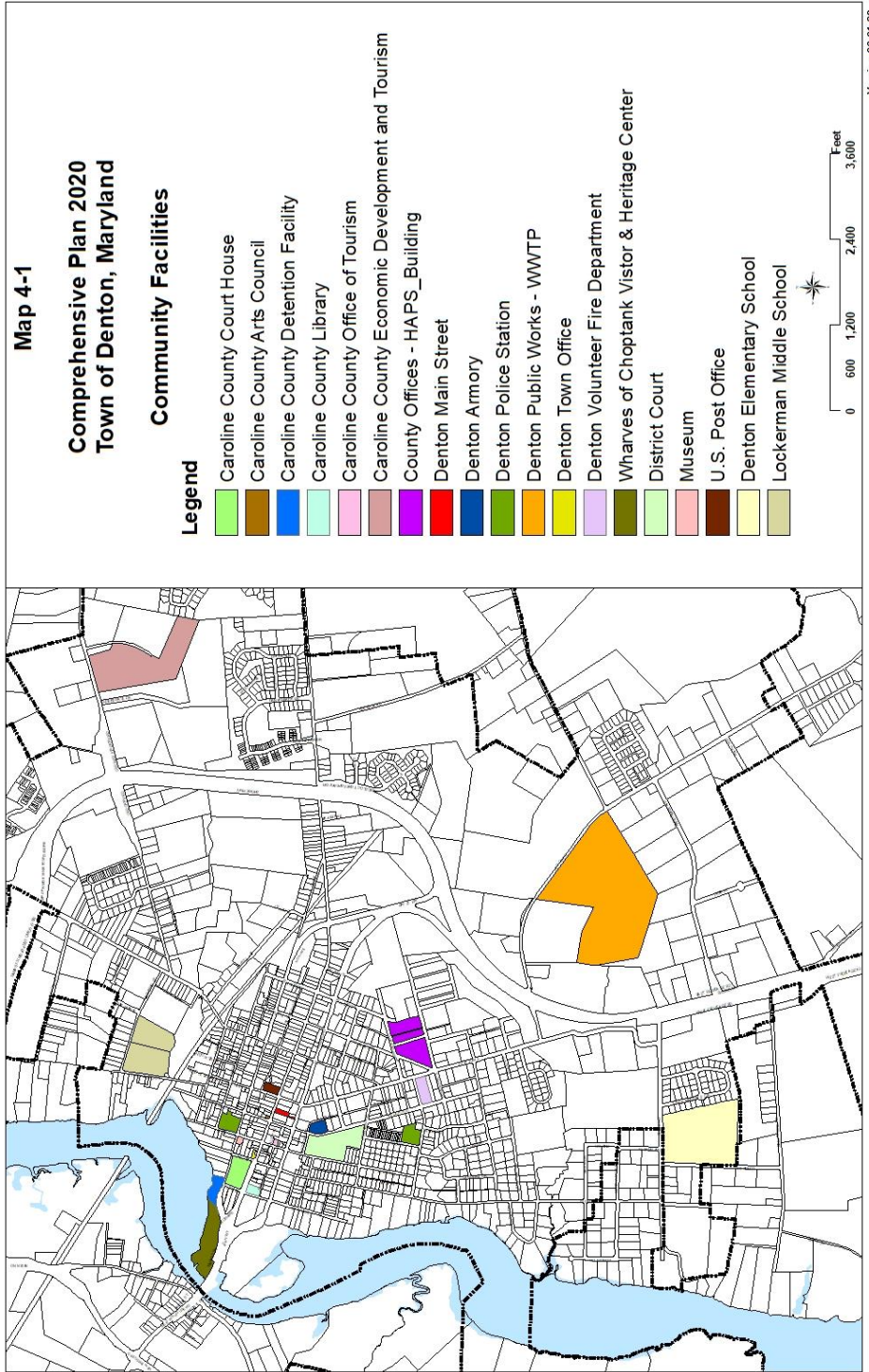
1. The Town will develop a Capital Improvement Program (CIP) coordinated with the Town's Annual Budget to outline the scheduling and phasing of public improvement projects for a revolving five (5) year period. As outlined in the CIP, the provision of public improvements will be balanced against the financial ability of the Town and the Town's objectives for managing the location and rate of growth.
2. The Town has established priorities for sewer and water service extension.
3. The Town requires all new development to pay for service extensions (sewer and water) and a "fair share" of the costs for capital improvements to community facility systems, which will be necessary to accommodate the new development's community facility and service demands. In addition, town-levied impact fees will recoup some of the costs associated with providing community facilities and services.
4. The Town requires adequate roads, sewerage, water, storm drainage, schools, fire, police protection, and solid waste collection and disposal as a condition of approval of all new developments.
5. Annexation is a condition for extending Town community facilities and services outside the Town's corporate limits.
6. Future large-scale developments will be required to provide exactions (proffers) of land dedications or fees-in-lieu of dedications to provide community facilities, including parks, schools, and open spaces.

Recommendations

The following are recommendations relative to Town-supplied community facilities and services.

1. Assess the impact of large-scale developments on Town and County public facilities and services to ensure they are adequate and appropriately funded.
2. Working with the Caroline County Department of Parks and Recreation, identify opportunities to develop neighborhood parks to serve current and future needs on the east side of MD 404. In addition to land and facilities, consideration should be given to opportunities to enhance pedestrian access to these park(s). Additional neighborhood park facilities serving the older central neighborhoods, those in the 4th Street Park service area, should also be considered (e.g., at the former Southern States property).

Map 4-1 Community Facilities



Map 4-2 – Denton Parks

