



M A R Y L A N D

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Tony Spencer
Chair, Region 7 Stakeholder Advisory Committee

Region 7 Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC) Meeting Notes

Meeting held virtually through Zoom
April 26, 2022 | 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

SAC members present: Leo Wilson (Vice-Chair), Troy Belt, Larry Burrows, Anna Mudd Griffith, Emile Henault, Jonathan Hollander, Charles James, Priscilla Kania, Lily Openshaw

County Staff present: Patrick Hughes, Long Range Planner, Office of Planning and Zoning (OPZ); Jessica Levy, Long Range Planner, OPZ; Preeti Emrick, Director, Office of Emergency Management (OEM); Greg Stewart, Senior Planning Manager, AACPS; Jonathan Boniface, Research Manager, AAEDC; Rudy Rodela, Chief Technology Officer, AACPL; Graham Lange, Strategic Planner/Analyst, Police Department; Trisha Wolford, Fire Chief, Fire Department

City Staff Present: Eric Leshinsky

Visitors: Steven Hyatt, Sara Neild

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 10:03 a.m.

The agenda was amended to allow the Office of Emergency Management to present first. There was a consensus that the agenda was approved.

Public Comment

No members of the public provided public comment.

Old Business

Mr. Henault motioned to approve the March 22, 2022 meeting notes. Mr. James seconded the motion. The notes were approved by a vote of 8-0. Ms. Kania joined the meeting after the vote was taken.

Office of Emergency Management - Preeti Emrick

Ms. Emrick presented slides on the Office of Emergency Management. There are four phases of emergency management: mitigate, prepare, respond, and recovery. The Emergency Operations Plan takes an all hazards approach and provides methods for obtaining assistance for State and Federal sources. The Hazard Mitigation Plan provides a systematic approach to assessing the natural hazards and risks. Flooding was identified as one of the most common natural hazards impacting the County.

Ms. Emrick provided an overview of how OEM worked through tropical storm Ida and the substantial coastal flooding that occurred during fall 2021. OEM works with OPZ and the Department of Public Works to address and prepare for future storms and flooding, especially given that Anne Arundel County has a number of coastal territories that are susceptible to climate change. OEM pursues Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) funding to aid mitigation projects related to coastal flooding.

OEM is conducting a Countywide Roadway Vulnerability Study to determine what roads and bridges are at risk for flooding. Outside of Region 7, the Shady Side Peninsula Climate Adaption Study and Sawmill Creek Tributaries

OEM provides mass care shelters, and in Region 7 the Mass Care Shelter is located at Annapolis High School.

Community members can increase their personal preparedness by signing up for OEMs alerts at alertannearundel.civiclead.com. Community members can also check if they live in a flood zone to consider flood insurance.

Mr. Wilson asked about the results of the Countywide Roadway Vulnerability Study. This plan is still in the development phase, and the kick off meeting recently occurred. Information will be available on OEM's website as the plan progresses.

Anne Arundel County Public Schools - Greg Stewart

Mr. Stewart presented slides on Anne Arundel County Public Schools. Anne Arundel County is the 38th largest school district in the United States and the fourth largest school district in the State by student count.

Region 7 is largely in the Annapolis feeder. A number of schools in Region 7 were recently renovated or replaced, or are in the process of being renovated or replaced. AACPS tracks population growth in feeder districts to determine the growth in student body for the various schools. Additionally, enrollment tends to fluctuate with changes in the programming offered at a school.

Ms. Openshaw asked via chat if AACPS will accept community feedback on developments at Hillsmere Elementary, specifically regarding the multipurpose fields. AACPS will work with the Department of Recreation and Parks to move forward on this project and determine how community feedback will be collected on this project.

Mr. Hollander asked via chat how the capacity issues at Annapolis High School compare to capacity issues at the feeder schools. Every year, AACPS is required by the State to update the Educational Facilities Master Plan, which provides population forecasts.

Mr. Burrows asked via chat if the Capital Budget accounts for expansion projects. Annapolis High School had a classroom addition recently, and portable classrooms are not typically included in capacity metrics. Redistricting can be a better use of resources to accommodate student growth due to high construction costs.

Mr. Wilson asked if the dip and then recovery of student enrollment due to Covid will be reflected in revised numbers coming in June. There is data on how each of the feeder districts was impacted by Covid. This information is available in the Educational Facilities Master Plan, which can be found on the public schools website.

Mr. Hollander asked via chat about the economic impacts of Annapolis High School being over capacity and whether the APF test for elementary and high schools, which it does.

Mr. Wilson commented on the challenges of redistricting, and the need to balance developing in urban areas without overburdening public facilities.

Mr. Hollander asked why Annapolis High School feeder schools have increased capacity, but Annapolis High School has not increased capacity. Mr. Leshinsky commented that the City hasn't made any specific requests to increase capacity at the High School, but the capacity issue impacts the County as well as the City. Mr. Stewart responded that before Annapolis High School increases capacity, AACPS would begin the redistricting process to fill available seats in adjacent schools.

Anne Arundel Economic Development Corporation - Jonathan Boniface

Mr. Boniface presented slides on economic development in Region 7. AAEDC is a quasi-governmental, non profit organization focused on economic development throughout the County.

Region 7 has approximately 25% of the primary jobs in Anne Arundel County. Many community members (85%) who work in Region 7 commute in from other Regions. Approximately 68% of employed residents in Region 7 commute outside of Region 7 for work.

Ms. Kania asked via chat about the amount of affordable housing that will be included in new housing. It was noted that this issue will be discussed in a later SAC meeting focused on housing.

Mr. Burrows asked via chat about what the County can do to attract new businesses. Mr. Boniface noted that the County is well-positioned already as an attractor of businesses because it is in a centralized location and has various anchors. Once a business is interested in developing in Anne Arundel County, AAEDC will connect with the business to help them grow.

Fire Department - Trisha Wolford

Chief Wolford presented slides on the fire department. Ms. Wolford provided an overview of the Fire Department's staffing and locations. There are 932 career firefighters, 285 of which are paramedic clinicians, and 324 volunteer firefighters. Region 7 has three fire stations and four "mutual aid" stations in the City and Naval Academy. The 2021 fire response time in Region 7 was 6:14 and there were 7,035 incidents in Region 7 in 2021.

Mr. Charles asked via the chat about the Fire Department's role in reviewing development projects. The Fire Department works closely with Inspections and Permits to review developments in regards to the fire code. There are numerous factors that are considered, such as road width and alternative access routes.

Mr. Burrows asked via the chat about the Fire Department's capacity to meet the needs of a growing County. The Fire Department received a Safer Grant to support the first three years of a new firefighter's salary. The department will reallocate staffing depending on the type of staffing and the apparatus that the County needs.

Ms. Kania asked via the chat about access to communities if a road is physically blocked so that traffic cannot enter a neighborhood, such as by a downed tree. The Fire Department would then attempt to cut the tree enough that a firetruck or ambulance can get through. The Fire Department also has ATVs that can take alternate routes. There are hand held stretchers that can be used to access people in need. Finally, the Fire Department can also travel by water to aid waterfront communities.

Anne Arundel County Public Libraries (AACPL) - Rudy Rodela

Mr. Rodela presented the slides on AACPL. There are 16 libraries in the County, and they tend to be in central locations in dense population areas.

There are four libraries serving Region 7 and there are 0.62 square feet of library per capita in Region 7. The Busch Annapolis Library in Region 7 is the County's first LEED Gold library. Additionally, Region 7 has Discoveries, the library located in the commercial retail space at Westfield Annapolis mall.

Mr. Burrows asked how many people use the library. Mr. Rodela noted that there are 310,000 card holders in the County, and circulation has returned to pre-pandemic levels (3.8 million items circulated so far this fiscal year). The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly changed how communities interact with the library.

Mr. Wilson commented that libraries are quickly becoming community centers that provide services beyond circulation. Mr. Wilson asked Mr. Rodela if there is a shift in the scope of what libraries will be in the future. Mr. Rodela noted libraries are no longer a warehouse for books; all new libraries will be engaging with the community on what the needs are in that area to determine how to design new libraries around people. AACPL connects with community members to find what they need and then develops libraries to attempt to meet those needs.

Mr. Wilson commented that the library in the commercial retail space is a great use of space.

Police Department

Mr. Lange, Strategic Planner for the County Police Department, shared information on the work of the Police Department. Region 7 is within the Southern Police District. Countywide, traffic stop/collision investigations have returned to pre-pandemic levels, and average response times are around four minutes.

Mr. Lange also provided statistics on the current and future staffing needs of the Police Department. The Police Department is currently around 200 officers short of what they need to be fully staffed, and 179 eligible for retirement.

The police station for Region 7, constructed in 2003, is within the Southern District, though the station is located outside of Region 7. The Police and Community Together (PACT) officers are responsible for establishing and maintaining close ties with the community. There are three PACT officers in the Southern District. Additionally, there is a Police Community Relations Council that meets regularly.

Ms. Openshaw asked who is the traffic coordinator for Region 7. The Southern District traffic coordinator is Officer Stanley.

Mr. Wilson asked if there is an increased need for infrastructure to go along with the need for additional staff. Many officers use their vehicle as their office, and they do not require a set office space in a building. There are infrastructure needs for general Countywide police operations, such as a new crime lab or a joint-911 call center.

Closing and Adjournment

Any questions that the SAC did not have the opportunity to ask presenters during today's meeting should be sent to Patrick Hughes or Desirae Williams to be shared with the presenters. Mr. Hughes noted that he would email to the SAC a Google document where these additional questions could be captured. The Google document is also a place to capture the SAC's thoughts on issues or ideas for goals or policies that need to be addressed with the Region 7 Plan.

The meeting adjourned at 12:12 pm.

Note: These meeting notes should not be considered as verbatim, but do encapsulate comments made by the Region 7 Stakeholder Advisory Committee, Office of Planning and Zoning staff, and persons who offered comments.