



Chapter VI Utilities and Public Facilities

6.1 Introduction

Public facilities are one of the most visible aspects of local government involvement in the life of its citizens. The planning for public facilities and utilities is a major element in providing for current and future needs of Hockessin Village residents, businesses and property owners. This section of the Plan provides an inventory of existing public facilities and utilities and contains policy recommendations to address existing problems and the future provision of such services.

A community is often judged by the quality of the facilities and services it provides. Quality of life and community pride are reflected by the condition of the streets, parks, community buildings, and other services. The most basic approach to providing for efficient public facilities is the generation of an informed plan. Community input is essential in developing such a plan and has been a vital component of the Hockessin Village Plan.

As mentioned in the Land Use chapter, targeting development to areas with existing infrastructure is compatible with the State's Livable Delaware objectives and with the concept of smart growth. This makes sense not only from a land use perspective, but also for the economical and efficient provision of public facilities and services.

Overall, the challenge to County government is to assure that necessary facilities and services are accessible, well-maintained, and responsive to the

6.2 Goal

Create, maintain and preserve excellent community facilities and services to include cultural and recreational facilities, social services and programs for all citizens.

The Hockessin Village Plan establishes an overall goal for public facilities and utilities, identifies objectives specific to the village area, and recommends implementation strategies to realize those objectives.

needs of Hockessin residents. Renovations to existing public buildings and construction of new facilities should set an example for architectural quality and reflect the character of the community.

6.3 Implementation Objectives

6.3.1

Establish and maintain open space in strategic areas throughout the Village to develop an interconnecting greenway system of natural areas and build upon the recreational and public facility services now provided.

6.3.2

Ensure that Hockessin's current and future sewer needs are met through proper funding allocations.

6.3.3

Examine opportunities for improving the visual appearance of Old Lancaster Pike by relocating utility lines and poles to the rear of properties or by placing such lines underground.

6.3.4

Develop, upgrade and maintain all utility systems, emphasizing quality and capacity in ways that are consistent with desired patterns of development.

6.4 Implementation Strategies

6.4.1

Track the County's capital improvement process to ensure that necessary sewer improvements are included.

6.4.2

Monitor future land use at NVF site to ensure that its one million gallon per day sewer allocation is equitably distributed in the future.

6.4.3

Map existing public and otherwise dedicated open space. Identify environmentally sensitive lands that should be protected and those lands

needed to provide linkages for pedestrian and bicycle connections.

6.4.4

Work with Conectiv to examine options for relocation or undergrounding of utility lines.

6.4.5

Work with Artesian, Conectiv, Verizon, Comcast and other applicable utility providers to ensure that they are fully aware of future land use plans for the Hockessin Village and are planning for adequate capacity to meet associated utility demands.

6.5 Inventory of Existing Services

Public facilities come from the different levels of government and from private volunteer community organizations such as the Hockessin Fire Department and the Hockessin Community Center.

6.5.1 Utilities

6.5.1.1 Sewer Service

During the countywide Plan update process, the County reviewed all land to determine the adequacy of infrastructure. Three categories were identified: (1) areas with adequate sewer and transportation; (2) areas that need sewer or transportation improvements; and (3) areas that need both sewer and transportation improvements. At the time the Plan was adopted the Hockessin village was classified as having both sewer and transportation shortfalls.

Since the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan, the County has allocated funding for sewer improvements that will increase capacity in the village area. The Hockessin village area is located within the service area of the Millcreek interceptor. Funding for improvements to the Millcreek interceptor became available July 1, 2002 and the project is being fast tracked. Improvements should be

completed within two years. The planned improvements to the Millcreek interceptor should create sufficient capacity for those areas west of Lancaster Pike. Areas east of Lancaster Pike currently have no capacity available, and no additional capacity will be provided with the planned interceptor improvements. It should be noted that the NVF facility has a large capacity permit, and redevelopment of that site could be accommodated by the release of that industrial permit. Further development east of Lancaster Pike would face capacity issues.

6.5.1.2 Other Utilities

In New Castle County the Department of Special Services is responsible for sanitary sewer service. Utilities other than sanitary sewer are provided by non-governmental entities, and no capacity or service limitations have been identified. Utility providers in the Hockessin area are listed below.



Gas	Conectiv
Electric	Conectiv
Water	Artesian
Telephone	Verizon
Cable TV	Comcast

6.5.2 Public Facilities

A variety of public facilities (See Illustration VI - 1) are located within the Hockessin Village area, including:

- New Castle County Library – Hockessin Branch
- Hockessin PAL Center/Adult Activity Center
- Hockessin Park I (3 acres; primarily wetlands)
- Hockessin Park II (16 acres at the PAL Center)
- Hockessin Police Substation
- Swift Park (30 acres; baseball, soccer, play equipment and walking trails)
- Smith Property (17 acres; a new park under development for soccer and greenways)
- Valley Road Park (38 acres; a new state park under design)
- Elsie Walker Park (State owned rest area on SR41 at Valley Road)

6.5.2.1 Library

The NCC Library in Hockessin opened in its current location on Valley Road in 1994. It is a 14,600 square foot facility providing 159,000 items. In FY2002, there were 21,000 registered users, 174,000 annual visitors, and a circulation of more than 548,000 items. This was a 10% increase in circulation and a 3% increase in users over the previous fiscal year. The FY 2004 budget contains funding for an expansion of the Hockessin Library facility. This may provide an opportunity for a “safe room” to house local historic reference materials and archives.

6.5.2.2 Hockessin PAL and Adult Activity Center. The Hockessin PAL Center opened in March, 2001. It serves a dual purpose, with a portion of the building dedicated to PAL activities and the remainder functioning as an adult activity center. The PAL Center is operated by the New Castle County Police Department.

Several officers are assigned to this facility “to aid in providing tutelage, mentoring and instruction to the children of Hockessin and the surrounding areas.” Numerous off-duty County Police officers volunteer their time to interact with the children of our communities in the effort to provide them with alternatives to crime. The PAL Center offers numerous programs for children ranging from martial arts to basketball. Many of the programs are supervised by civilian personnel and volunteers, while some programs are actually taught by New Castle County Police Officers. The programs have been extremely successful, and allow both the officers and residents of New Castle County to interact with, and learn from,



one another. This interaction lays the foundation for the building of solid relationships between police and the community.

The mission of PAL is to:

- prevent youth crime in Delaware by providing youth between the ages of 8 to 18 with supervised athletic, educational, and social development activities;
- reach out to youth with programs which address citizenship, self-esteem, substance abuse, and respect for law and order; and,
- encourage participation and support by the community in P.A.L. programs to help build a solid foundation for Delaware’s youth for life.”

Public Facilities Inventory

- Baptist Church
- Chippey Chapel
- Community Center
- Hockessin Fire Hall
- Hockessin Park
- Hockessin Public Library
- Police Substation
- Methodist Church
- PAL Center
- Smith Property
- Swift Park
- Valley Road Park



Hockessin Village
Plan

PUBLIC FACILITIES INVENTORY

The Adult Activity Center is operated by the New Castle County Department of Community Services. The Center operates Monday through Friday, and sponsors a variety of programs including fitness, health, financial planning, hobbies/crafts, art, cooking, decorating and more. In its first year of operation, more than 18,000 participated in the various programs.

6.5.2.3 Hockessin Police Substation

The Hockessin Police Substation is housed in the historic Lamborn Library building, which was once the first school house in Hockessin. The substation provides a meeting space for community groups and houses the Senior Roll Call Lifeline. This program contacts approximately 500 citizens daily via an automated telephone system with a friendly phone call and safety message. The program is designed to start a potentially lifesaving chain of events should the system receive a busy signal or no answer.

6.5.2.4 Swift Park. Swift Park is located on Old Lancaster Pike, within the village core. This park provides play equipment, three little league baseball fields, a Babe Ruth baseball field, a soccer field and a walking trail. The baseball fields are leased to and maintained by Piedmont Baseball and the soccer field is currently leased to and maintained by the Hockessin Soccer Club. A vehicular parking lot is located on Old Lancaster Pike, and additional parking is provided in conjunction with the library lot on Valley Road.

6.5.2.5 Smith Property. The Smith Property, located on Grant Avenue, provides additional soccer fields and walking trails.

6.5.2.6 Hockessin Park I and II. Hockessin Park I is a three-acre passive facility located behind MR Docs. Hockessin Park II is adjacent to the PAL center and contains a baseball field, which is maintained by Piedmont Baseball.

6.5.2.7 Valley Road Park. A new park, approximately 30 acres, is being established by DELDOT in proximity to the village, in connection with the Limestone Road construction project. It will be located at the intersection of Limestone and Valley Roads. The park will provide a home for the relocated Tweeds Tavern, include space for relocation of an additional historic structure, provide recreational fields, and have trails within the park as well as bicycle and pedestrian connections to nearby residential communities.

6.5.3 Quasi Public Facilities

6.5.3.1 Hockessin Community Center.

The Hockessin Community Center is located on Millcreek Road, near the historic Chippey Chapel. The Community Center is “dedicated to community improvement through the task of meeting the educational, cultural, recreational and social services needs of the community.” It has operated as a 501 C3 non-profit



since 1968, and provides programs for youth, adults, and seniors. Its facility is also made available to civic and social groups for meeting purposes.

The Community Center provides emergency services including rent/mortgage assistance, temporary housing,

utility bill assistance, and a food closet. Housing counseling is provided for first-time homebuyers. This vital service allows renters to become homeowners by assisting with budgeting, and other skills necessary to achieve mortgage approval. During calendar year 2002 the Community Center made it possible for more than 1,300 clients to become homeowners for the first time. Many other services are also provided such as holiday food distributions, domestic violence programs, American Red Cross CPR classes, AARP tax service, monthly senior luncheons, and senior bingo. Through its variety of programs the Community Center serves more than 4,000 clients annually.

6.5.3.2 Hockessin Volunteer Fire Company. The founders of the Hockessin Volunteer Fire Company held their first official meeting on October 15, 1936 in the Lamborn Library. Since that time the Company has grown to more than 150 members and has continued to increase its ability to provide fire and rescue services to residents and businesses in the Hockessin area. The Company now maintains a variety of fire apparatus to meet these needs, including: two engine trucks, a tanker, a tower truck, a rescue truck, a brush truck, an antique fire truck and an ambulance. Ambulance service is provided twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. The station is



6.6 Identified Problems

6.6.1 Drainage/Flooding

Existing flooding problems exist in the Hockessin Village area. These are located primarily in the vicinity of Old Lancaster Pike and Yorklyn Road, but also extend into Swift Park and adjacent properties along Mill Creek. Much of this area is located in the designated 100-year floodplain, and its natural characteristics are to retain water in heavy rain events. An objective of this Plan is to address the existing flooding and drainage problems, and ensure that future infill and development is possible without exacerbating these problems. Please refer to the Resource Protection chapter.

6.6.2 Water Supply

While Artesian has not identified any service shortfalls, water supply is a concern throughout the County and the State. In the Pre-Planning Study of Hockessin, conducted in 2001, residents expressed concern regarding the adequacy of future water supplies, and identified a problem with low water pressure. A recent progress report released by the State, 2020 on Tap – Ensuring Delaware’s Fresh Water Supply, addresses these concerns and recommends strategies to achieve water supply objectives.

6.6.3 Cockeysville Aquifer - Resource Protection Area

Water quality aspects associated with this protected resource are addressed in the Natural Resources section of this Plan. Since the primary water supply in this area is dependent upon ground water versus surface water, it is important to retain the natural ability to recharge the aquifer, or underground water supply.