

VISIT

Friendsville

MARYLAND



FRIENDSVILLE Revitalization Plan

NOVEMBER 2015

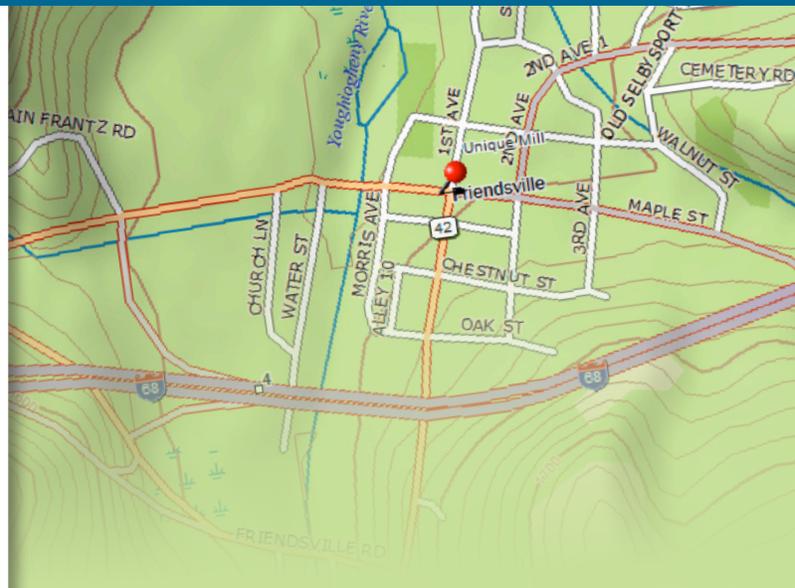


Table of Contents

- I. Introduction > 3
- II. Community Assessment > 5
- III. Recommendations > 10
- IV. Implementation > 24

APPENDICES

- A: Case Study of Three Comparable Towns > 29
- B: Demographic and Economic Tables > 31
- C: Eastern Continental Divide Trail Route > 37
- D: Façade Renovation Work Scope > 38
- E: Property Inventory Form > 39

I. Introduction

In its 250th anniversary year, the Town of Friendsville is celebrating its rich heritage and traditions as a close knit rural community in northern Garrett County. This year's celebrations highlighted the strong bond that existing and former residents have with the town. Much pride and joy was on display during the many well planned events that took place throughout the year. The enthusiasm created by the celebrations created new momentum to develop this plan for the next generation of Friendsville residents.

Under the leadership of the Town of Friendsville, a team of consultants was retained to prepare the plan. The team was comprised of Terrell Ellis & Associates, Terri Reed Cutright & Associates, and Michael Gioulis, Historic Preservation Consultant. Taking into consideration the town's 2003 Community Legacy Strategic Plan, the planning team reviewed progress made toward completion of the many comprehensive community revitalization projects and programs in that document. This plan builds on the 2003 study and provides a more focused look at strategies for growing the existing business base by:

- **strengthening existing businesses;**
- **attracting new business enterprise;**
- **developing options for housing development; and**
- **improving the marketing activities to attract more residents, businesses, and tourists.**

Input for the plan was gathered through a variety of means including statistical data collection, three community meetings, and numerous individual interviews with local, county, and state representatives.



The consultants also visited with three towns of similar size and nature as Friendsville: Ohiopyle, PA and Davis and Thomas, WV. All three towns are experiencing some economic growth and development related to nature based tourism, a strength of Friendsville as well. During these visits interviews were conducted with businesses and community leaders to try to determine what, if any, specific triggers were responsible for this new growth. A full description of the findings is found in Appendix A.

SUMMARY OF CASE STUDY FINDINGS:

1. The presence of an anchor business.

In the case of Thomas, it is the Purple Fiddle, which draws customers seven days a week for food and live music. The Purple Fiddle with its eclectic customer base does an excellent job marketing itself not only in Canaan Valley, but also within a 50 mile radius thus, drawing tourists and regional residents. In Davis, Sirianni's has much the same popularity and acts as an anchor for that town. In Ohiopyle, the Falls Market General Store anchors the downtown with the business fronting both the river and the bike trail.

2. Ecotourism.

In each of the towns river and biking recreational activities are the main ecotourism attractions. In Ohiopyle they have found that 10% of visitors to their community come for the river activities and 90% for biking. Individuals interested in river and biking are often also drawn to camping. Each of the towns and surrounding communities has ample camping facility to support their current customer base.

3. The availability of cheap rent.

Storeowners repeatedly said that without inexpensive rent (typically \$300 -\$500 per month for a storefront) they would not be able to survive. This is especially true for Thomas where the nature of the customer base still remains very seasonal.

4. Technical and financial support.

While the towns themselves are not able to provide much in the way of technical and financial support, the Woodlands Community Development Corporation (CDC) has a strong presence in Thomas and Davis. This CDC assists business owners with financing and business development issues, and provides flexible terms to underwrite loans that are often less than desirable to traditional lenders.

5. Alternative lifestyles.

The business owners in these communities often are not only interested in financial gain. Many locate their businesses to the towns to pursue their business interest and love of the natural environment in a laid back community that offers them the ability to operate with little regulation, overhead, and pressure.

6. Multi-business ownership.

The towns all had business owners that expanded their businesses or created complementary stand-alone businesses. For example:

- a. Sirianni's restaurant located in Davis is in process of opening a white table cloth restaurant in Thomas,
- b. Falls Market General Store, in Ohiopyle, has expanded into bike rentals,
- c. Laurel Highland River outfitter, in Ohiopyle, owned a hotel that catered to river and bicycling enthusiasts, and has just opened a zip line business.

7. User fees (revenue).

Ohiopyle collects a concession fee on rafters (.50 per each rafter), that is then used for borough upkeep and maintenance, township road maintenance, park safety equipment, and lastly for town and business marketing.

II. Community Assessment

A. Demographic, Economic, and Housing Data

Exhibits in Appendix B provide an overview of Friendsville's demographic and economic trends. The information in this section sets the stage for understanding some of the community's strengths and weaknesses from a data perspective. The numbers are important but they don't tell the whole story, so any assessment of the community must take into consideration not only the data, but also the surrounding built and natural environment, and the human capacity of those living in the community to undertake the necessary actions for change.

Demographic Trends

- The county has experienced very modest population growth but the Town of Friendsville has seen significant population decline during the same time period.
- The number of households in the county has grown by about 5% but the size of the households is diminishing.
- The number of households in Friendsville has decreased by 5% and the household size is decreasing at about the same rate as the county.
- The median age for Garrett County is 42.7 and 44.6 for Friendsville. In Friendsville, over 37% of the population is over the age of 62 compared to 21% for the County.
- The decreasing household size is reflective of an aging population.

Economic Trends

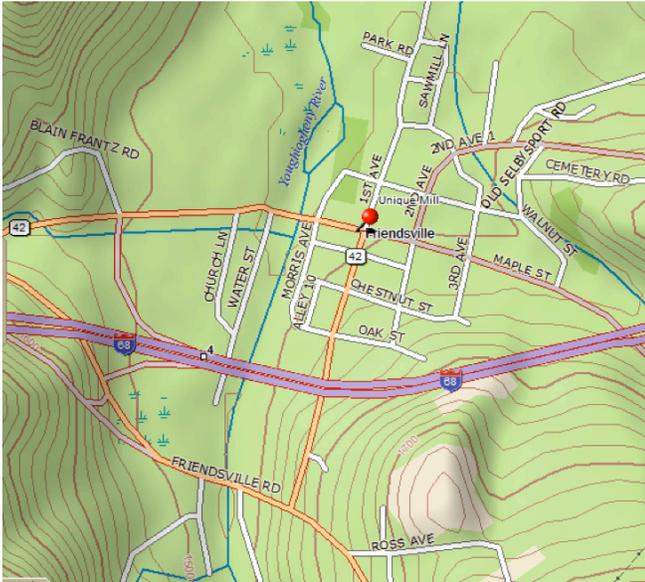
- Job growth in the county is occurring at the greatest pace for the following industries: construction, transportation/communications/utilities, finance and insurance, arts/entertainment/recreation/food/lodging, and other services
- Friendsville's employment pattern is substantially similar to the county, with the exception that there was significant growth in the health and education related services sector.
- Exhibit 2-8 reflects changes in the economy moving

forward from 2010-2013 which reflects a time of adjustments due to the national recession. Of most interest is the dramatic decrease in the number of employees in the arts/entertainment/recreation sector. In addition, there was a significant decrease in employment in the construction industry for the same time frame.

- In 2013, the tourism sector of the county's economy had a \$229 million impact. Exhibit 2-10 depicts the various subsectors and their relative growth from 2009-2013. The recreation subsector had the lowest rate of growth which corresponds to the sharp drop in employment that is identified in Exhibit 2-8 for recreation.

Housing Trends

- Exhibit 2-11 shows a nearly 20% vacancy rate on all housing units in Friendsville.
- The County had a 36% vacancy rate, but 29% of the housing stock is used for seasonal purposes. Therefore, a more realistic vacancy rate is 7%.
- The number of owner occupied units increased by 16% in Friendsville from 2000-2010, but the number of renter occupied units for the same time period declined by 34%.
- Exhibit 2-13 shows that Friendsville's housing values far outpaced the county's from 2010-2013, making it an attractive location for homeownership.
- Friendsville's housing stock is in good condition.



B. Locational Advantage

Friendsville sits at the first exit off of Interstate 68 eastbound from West Virginia. It is the “gateway to Western Maryland” and all that Garrett County has to offer in terms of adventure sports, recreational activity, agricultural and heritage tourism, scenic beauty, and small town charm.

According to the Maryland Department of Highways, approximately 6,400 vehicles per day pass the Friendsville exit and approximately 2,200 of them take the exit. Most are likely going to Deep Creek Lake, but this traffic presents an opportunity for the Town to draw visitors in if the message is properly and adequately communicated that there is a reason it stop.

C. Natural and Scenic Resources

1) Youghiogheny River

The beauty and recreational value of the Youghiogheny River is well documented. The Youghiogheny is popular for whitewater canoeing, kayaking and rafting. Three sections of the river, varying in difficulty, are available on a predictable basis for whitewater recreation:

- Top Yough, near Swallow Falls State Park in Maryland (Class IV-V)
- Upper Yough, from Sang Run to Friendsville, Maryland (Class IV-V)
- Middle Yough, from Confluence, Pennsylvania to Ohio pyle (Class II)

With two rafting outfitters located in town, the river draws approximately 3,000 boaters to Friendsville annually. The Youghiogheny is also known for fishing, having brown and rainbow trout, as well as smallmouth.

2) Eastern Continental Divide Trail

Friendsville is at one terminus of the county's 150 mile trail system known as the Eastern Continental Divide Trail (ECDT). The vision for the ECDT is that it will link with the Great Allegheny Passage, a multi-use trail along the former Western Maryland Railway right-of-way, which extends from Pittsburgh to Washington, D.C.

A map outlining the proposed ECDT trail route is found in Appendix C. The Kendall Trail in Friendsville extends for approximately two miles south toward Swallow Falls through Maryland Department of Natural Resources Land where further construction is stalled until the DNR provides the consent to continue for another eight miles to link with other section of the trail at Swallow Falls. There are also proposed routes to secure a passage to the north to Confluence in Pennsylvania where the trail can link to the Great Allegheny Passage. These routes through Friendsville will require reaching agreement with private landowners to allow access easements through their lands.

D. Historic Resources

While many of the town's historic structures have been lost over time, there are still a critical few buildings left that are symbolic and integral to the integrity of the community. Most notable is the former Unique Mill located on Maple Street. This mill is an excellent representation of the industrial heritage of the community and its millworks are still intact on the inside. It is considered to be under potential threat as it was purchased by the BFS Corporation as part of its acquisition of the adjoining gas station. Plans for the site are uncertain at this time, but there is considerable concern among community members that the Mill structure will be demolished as part of BFS' redevelopment of the site.

E. Quality of Life

Sometimes the intangible qualities of living in a small town are difficult to quantify, but Friendsville has amenities that are very important to many people when they are looking for a place to live:

- A close knit community.
- Excellent schools including a National and State Blue Ribbon Elementary and High School. It should be noted that the elementary school was under threat of closure because of declining enrollment. The community has strongly advocated for it to

remain open and Garrett Community Action has incorporated a Head Start and daycare program into the school which has stabilized it for the time being. But the future is still unclear and this has caused great concern in the community.

- A beautiful community park with excellent facilities including ball fields, restrooms, community meeting space, walking path, and exercise course.
- Well maintained housing stock.

F. Business Mix

For a town of its size, Friendsville has a good mix of businesses that serve the community and tourists. Types of businesses located in the downtown area include:

- Grocery (1) and Health Foods (1)
- Pharmacy and convenience (1)
- Gas Stations (2)
- Medical Office (1)
- Lodging (2)
- Rafting Outfitters (2)
- Restaurants (4) including the county's only vegetarian restaurant
- Drinking establishments (2) and package store (1)
- Photography and graphic design (1)
- Historical Museum (1)
- Hardware (1)
- Inflatable boat manufacturing (1)
- Construction related (2)

Additionally, there are a number of businesses located just outside of the town limits that have capitalized on the agricultural and rural nature of the community. These include a value added food production facility (meat processing), an event venue, and a winery.

The mix of existing downtown businesses is good, but operations for some appear to be marginal and it is evident that all of the businesses can benefit from additional foot traffic that would result from more marketing and an expanded base of businesses. However there are few sites for business attraction and expansion, and several buildings are currently occupied by very marginal ground floor uses including storage. Some ground floor spaces have been converted to residential use thus creating voids in retail space.

G. Community Meeting

On August 5th, 2015, a community meeting was held to assess residents' and stakeholders' thoughts regarding the future direction of the town. Appendix B summarizes the entirety of the input received at that meeting which focused on answering the following questions. Listed below the questions are the responses cited most often by those in attendance.

1. What are the community's greatest strengths?

- a. Friendsville Park
- b. School
- c. Public library
- d. Locally owned businesses
- e. Community events
- f. River
- g. Trails

2. What are the threats or barriers to attracting business and investment?

- a. Lack of water and sewer taps: The State of Maryland and Garrett County have limited the number of new water and sewer taps that can be allotted in the community. This number was recently relaxed to allow for an additional 25 taps to be placed in service.
- b. Potential future fracking: The current two year moratorium on fracking will expire in a year and there are many who believe that allowing fracking will significantly damage the bucolic nature of the community and threaten its future.
- c. Lack of stores or things to draw people in
- d. Closing of school

3. What support do businesses need in order to thrive?

- a. More tourists and foot traffic; and more stores to draw people in
- b. Completion of the trail system

4. How can we recruit more business and investment to the community?

- a. Advertise in Morgantown, Uniontown and Cumberland
- b. Partner with Davis & Thomas, WV
- c. Advocate for more water/sewer capacity
- d. Promote the town more

H. Garrett County Economic Development and Tourism Market Opportunities

Friendsville's future is closely tied to the county's economic initiatives including those related to the tourism industry. It will be important to determine which county economic strategies complement the town's vision for development, and then secure the county's participation in implementing those strategies in Friendsville.

THE COUNTY'S CURRENT BUSINESS TARGETS:

- Agriculture related / Food production & processing, including a "Buy Local" program
- High end precision manufacturing
- Data & call centers
- Entrepreneurship
- Clean energy production
- Heritage related development
- Tourism and recreation

Tourism's role with regard to the county's economy continues to grow. According to the Garrett County Chamber of Commerce, there was significant growth in several sectors of the tourism trade from 2009-2013 as follows.

Sector	% Increase
Lodging	26
Food & Beverage	28
Retail	32
Recreation	17
Transportation	36
Second Homes	28

In 2014, 1.2 million visitors spent \$299 million in Garrett County. In order to understand the potential economic impact of these visitors, it is important to note the average daily expenditures of visitors in the county. In a 2010 study commissioned by the Garrett County Chamber of Commerce, the average daily expenditure per person was calculated at \$94.40. This was further broken down as follows:

Item	Expenditure (\$)
Gasoline	10.60
Lodging	23.10
Restaurants	21.80
Groceries	13.10
Shopping	10.10
Admission Fees	11.80

A survey of 100 attendees at the Friendsville Days event in July, 2015 offered insight into what residents of the town think are desirable types of development for the community.

	Include	% of Resp.	Avoid	% of Resp.
Senior Housing	35	78%	4	9%
Single Family Homes	32	71%	8	18%
Restaurants	40	89%	4	9%
Small Downtown Shops	40	89%	3	6%
Fast Food	21	47%	18	4%
Chain Stores	19	42%	22	49%
Light Industrial	20	44%	20	44%
Farmers Market	41	91%	1	2%
Heavy Manufacturing	12	27%	25	56%

At the same time, tourists were asked to respond to the types of businesses they would like to see developed in the town.

Type of business	Percent
Small retail shops	65%
Restaurants	100%
Fast Food	30%
Lodging	44%
Convenience	70%
Visitor Information	26%

The tourism market must be combined with the resident market to determine projections for the demand, and therefore, the absorption of commercial space in Friendsville. For the purpose of this report, a five mile trade area is assumed for determining supply and demand for consumer expenditures. Five miles was chosen in order to avoid the McHenry area around Deep Creek Lake which skews the data because of the predominance of tourism expenditures there.

The following table demonstrates that there is an approximate \$22.3 million gap in retail sales within the trade area, meaning that residents inside the trade area are spending these dollars elsewhere.

	Demand (Retail Potential)	Supply (Retail Sales)	Retail Gap
Total Retail Trade	\$24,474,860	\$3,946,287	\$20,528,573
Total Food and Drink	\$2,321,380	\$582,678	\$1,738,702
Total	\$26,796,239	\$4,528,965	\$22,267,274

Therefore in order to determine how much commercial space can be projected for Friendsville, we calculate demand for tourists and residents using the following assumptions.

- Tourism based expenditures for 4,000 annual visitors x \$94.40 (3,000 boaters plus 1,000 others) = \$377,600.
- Assume average sales per square foot for commercial space of \$100/sf.
- Tourism sales support 3,776 square feet of space.
- Assume over a 3-5 year period, a 5% capture rate of the retail gap (\$1,113,000) at \$100 per sf = 11,113 square feet of space.
- Friendsville can support about 15,000 square feet of commercial space if tourists and trade area customers are spending in a robust way.
- Current inventory of commercial space is about 11,000 square feet, meaning that the town should focus on the development of an additional 4,000 square feet of commercial space over the next 3-5 years.

I. Community Assessment Conclusions

1. Declines in population and the number of households, coupled with an aging population, signal the need for Friendsville to attract a younger population in order to grow and prosper.
2. The natural and scenic resources which are such a part of the town's history, culture and economy, remain as the foundational assets upon which future investment will occur.
3. There is a good mix of retail business and services but it needs to be strengthened and promoted. To strengthen the district, both the mix and marketing of businesses needs to be improved. It is difficult to improve the mix because important sites for

business development are tied up with marginal or inappropriate ground floor uses such as apartments and storage. Marketing efforts need to be improved and the need for additional anchor businesses to critical a critical mass needs to be addressed.

4. Tourism is a driving force for the local economy, and there is potential to leverage the 3,000-4,000 annual visitors into more economic activity. Friendsville needs to combine market demand from tourists and residents, with county special project initiatives to create business opportunities. For example, the County's Agricultural Aggregation Study, or Buy Local program, may provide an opportunity to capture business related to food production and distribution. These types of businesses are very appealing to tourists and provide value to residents as well.
5. Housing represents a good investment option for people but it won't come on its own. Census data tells us that home values are holding strong. Friendsville has close proximity and easy access to major employers. With excellent schools and important child care support programs, the community is ideally situated to attract new residents, particularly young working families.

The perceived strengths of the housing opportunity can be coupled with the desire on the part of the county's leadership to attract and retain young professionals and their families to the county. This desire is coupled with the policy intent of locating investment of this type in municipalities as a revitalization strategy. As such the county is developing a program to provide favorable financing terms to families purchasing homes in Garrett County municipalities.

III. Recommendations

A. Business Development Recommendations

1. Organize and strengthen existing businesses. Existing businesses are the Town's greatest ambassadors. If a potential business is interested in locating in Friendsville, the existing businesses need to be able to promote the benefits of operating there. The existing business in the community could benefit from the creation of a business association to organize several initiatives including:

- a) Joint marketing and promotions: Businesses pooling their resources to cross promote, undertake cooperative advertising, and coordinate activities will create a much greater draw of visitors to the community than each business operating solo. As a group, an association can plan an annual coordinated advertising and promotion calendar that will effectively allocate scarce marketing dollars to make a greater impact. This should be done in close coordination with events and advertising sponsored by the county CVB in order to maximize exposure.
- b) Small business technical resource workshops: It appears that some businesses could use help with some of the following: marketing, enhancement of inventory, managing cash flow, and merchandising to name some. There are several free services that businesses in the community can access including the Small Business Development Center, Garrett College Entrepreneurship Program, and Natural Capital Investment Fund (NCIF). NCIF in particular has a microloan and other financing programs targeted to Western Maryland communities that are designed to be flexible in nature. A good place to start is with the SBDC at Garrett College. Issue an invitation to their representative to meet with the business association to discuss the various programs and resources available, and then encourage one-on-one technical assistance.

2. Construct a new rafting and retail center adjacent to the parking lot at the entrance to town where boaters park. This site provides critical parking for the rafting community. It is heavily used on weekends. However, there are portions of the parcel that are not used for parking and could be developed with a small building to



replace the portable bathrooms and temporary building that is used as a changing room. The proposed building should include restrooms, a changing room or lockers for boaters, and about 1,000 square feet of retail space that can be geared toward serving the outdoor recreation market including fishing, cycling, boating, and other related goods and services. This new building should work in concert with the Veterans Memorial that is planned for site. The renderings below depict both projects on the same parcel and they should be carefully sited so that they complement one another. The ownership of this facility should be viewed as a public-private partnership. There are two options that can be pursued for development of this site:

- a) The Town of Friendsville is interested in pursuing a new town hall that will improve its operations and efficiencies. The Town could consider this project as a potential site, and when combined with leased retail space, this could be the catalyst for a significant new development at the entrance to the community. In vacating the current town hall location, the town will provide much needed room for the library to expand into the town's space. This creates a win-win for all.
- b) Alternatively, the Town could build the building without the Town Hall component, and lease the retail space to a private business at a discounted rate in exchange for a maintenance agreement with the business to oversee the common are restrooms and changing areas.



There are some options for financing this project that combine public and private sector funds. Similar to the Town of Ohiopele's surcharge on rafting customers to support economic promotion and activity, this proposal recommends that a surcharge of at least \$5 per person be placed on boaters to support the development and maintenance of not only the new restrooms/changing

areas but also the long term maintenance of the parking lot. A rendering of the project is provided above. The following chart summarizes these options and costs for development and financing. As shown, the inclusion of the Town Hall in the project will result in a negative cash flow unless additional grant funds are injected into the project.

Construction Costs: @ \$200/sf	Option A: 2,500 sf, \$500,000	Option B: 1,500 sf, \$300,000
Grant Funds	\$150,000	\$100,000
USDA Community Facilities Loan @ 4% for 40 years	\$350,000	\$200,000
Debt Service	\$17,600	\$10,000
Operating Expenses: @ \$6/sf	\$15,000	\$ 9,000
Total Expenses	\$32,600	\$19,000
Rental Revenue from Retail Space @ \$600/mo.	\$7,200	\$7,200
Surcharge on Boaters @ \$5 per person	\$15,000	\$15,000
Total Revenue	\$22,200	\$22,200
Net	(\$10,400)	\$3,200



3. Develop a Visitors Center and interpretative space at the former Unique Mill. The historic mill is the most iconic historic property in the community and it must be saved. It is currently owned by BFS Corporation as part of the adjacent gas station property. The uncertainty of its final disposition has created a cloud of concern over the building's future and its loss would leave a tremendous void in the character of the downtown area. It represents both the industrial and agricultural heritage of the community. The interior, with its perfectly intact mill workings, provides an excellent opportunity to attract heritage tourists to the center of the town. This, combined with the recent closing of the Maryland DOT Visitors' Center on I-68, represents the opportunity to position Friendsville as the Gateway to Western Maryland and create a Visitors Center within the historic mill. With proper signage on the interstate, the town can draw from the 6,400 cars per day that go by the Friendsville exit. This project is very complementary to the county's heritage management area program and should be eligible for both local county mini-grants to support marketing, as well as State Heritage Area funds for restoration. However this project will not succeed if the property cannot be secured from its current owner. BFS needs to hear a persuasive argument about the importance of the building and the need for them to consider a donation of the structure to the community. A value proposition should be developed that emphasizes:

- The role the building plays in telling the community's history and its value as an economic draw to attract people to the center of town.
- As a Visitors Center, the attraction it can provide in getting people to the adjoining gas station rather than have them stop at the gas station close to the interstate exit.

- The federal charitable deduction value of a donation or bargain sale to the community.
- The sponsorship opportunity that can be developed through a donation or bargain sale by exposing visitors to the BFS brand. A partnership could be developed between BFS and the Friendsville Visitors' Center (with a possible connection to the larger McHenry Visitors Center) that jointly promotes the BFS brand and Garrett County.

4. Develop low cost temporary or "pop up" business space to attract weekend or seasonal businesses using such locations as vacant buildings, vacant lots, and even portable, leased storage container units. Local artisans, craft fair vendors, and shops in adjoining communities make for excellent candidates for such businesses. In order to pursue this recommendation, the location of one or more business sites will need to be identified, and temporary leases negotiated if appropriate. If building space is not available, the construction of temporary outdoor space is an excellent alternative.



Temporary retail space in Charleston, WV



Pop Up Space in Ohiopyle, PA



5. Identify a property for redevelopment as an agricultural and artisan retail sales center with a commercial kitchen component. The property located at 272 Maple Street is a possible candidate as it combines ground floor retail space on one side, with an existing commercial kitchen on the other side of the ground floor. And it is currently for sale. The building should be examined for its suitability to be converted to a commercial kitchen for the production of locally grown processed foods. The retail side of the building should be considered as a retail outlet for these products and local arts and crafts. Upstairs apartments could be marketed as “Live-Work” space for local artisans. The artists’ cooperative portion of this project should be led by a group of artists that are knowledgeable and interested in promoting art in this portion of the county. In other words, this must be driven by the artists, not the town. The commercial kitchen portion of the project should be pursued with interest and leadership from the county’s economic development office.

According to a study currently underway by the County’s Economic Development Department, prepared by Downstream Strategies, there are opportunities for locally grown food to be aggregated and distributed in the county to local and regional users, and it is noted that there are no current facilities in the northern end of the county. The preliminary report finds the following gaps or opportunities for agricultural production in the county.¹

Need for More Aggregation

Challenges of Garrett Growers to aggregate and incorporate local producers in the northern part of the county should be examined. Their model currently relies on proximity of their farms. How to facilitate additional aggregation?

Need for More Distribution

No local distributors currently buy or sell local food. There is a need for more advanced distribution channels. What are the potential connections among existing distributors?

Need for More Local Sales

There is not a good way to get local product into restaurants and other tourism-based businesses in the area in part due to the seasonality and inconsistency of the market. What is the best way to increase sales to local residents?

Need More Production to Expand Distribution and Sales

There are not enough farms growing the products needed to expand distribution. There are relatively few farmers direct marketing, and many are selling at capacity. How to increase production capacity among existing farmers and encourage farms to transition to food production?

Tourist Season

Produce and tourism peak around the same time of year, but after Labor Day, restaurant and direct sales drop off due to visitors leaving the area. There is a need to find more consistent markets instead of developing and shutting down each season.

Opportunity for Developing Storage/ Preservation Businesses

Frozen/preserved foods are an opportunity for extending the selling season. Developing this opportunity would require more processing and storage facilities. This could be for both vegetable and meat storage.

Opportunity to Develop Minimal Processing and Storage Locations

This would include having facilities strategically placed, and would allow minimal aggregation before distributors picked up product.

In order to advance this project, the Town should, in conjunction with the Garrett Arts Council and County, undertake an analysis of the interest and costs associated with development of this project. If determined feasible, consult with the building owner about securing an option on the property and approach the County to assist with the cost of the option agreement.

1. Gaps/Opportunities: Garrett County Local Foods Distribution Plan, Phase I Overview of the Garrett County Local Foods System, Downstream Strategies.

6. Recruit new businesses or foster the expansion of existing businesses. Suggestions on how to undertake this are found in Section IV. D. The types of businesses that are most appropriate for location in Friendsville relate to:

- a. Eating, drinking, & music: These types of establishments are destinations by themselves, and tend to draw other businesses around them. The Thomas, WV case study illustrates that a local very popular restaurant and music venue, The Purple Fiddle, is the catalyst for much of the new business development in the community.
- b. Lodging such camping and Bed & Breakfast/Air BnB accommodations: The number of boaters coming into the community provides a chance for the town to capture overnight visitation. An overnight campground with very basic accommodations is an excellent business opportunity. Overnight camping or lodging expenditures are currently being made outside of Friendsville.
- c. Fly fishing outfitter with a retail component: About a half dozen professional guide services operate out of Ohiopyle, PA. The Maryland portion of the river, known primarily for brown rainbow trout is a growing destination for anglers. With a year round season, this is a great business opportunity that is not subject to as much seasonal fluctuation as rafting.
- d. Bike shop with equipment and rentals: Since Friendsville is placing an emphasis on bicycling with its designated biked trail, future trail system, and the parking lot that provides a place for people to drop off the interstate and ride, a potential business opportunity to serve this portion of the outdoor market has good potential. When the planned connection of the Kendall Trail to the Great Allegheny Passage occurs, this opportunity skyrockets. According to a study documenting the economic impact of the Great Allegheny Passage, over one-third of the overnight trail users reported household incomes of \$100,000 or more representing a potential source of lucrative spending.²
- e. Unique thrift stores & antiques: The key word is "unique". A run of the mill thrift store will not be an asset to the community. However, one that focuses on vintage items or those of a certain era will become a destination place for your community. This type of business also requires lower rents than

some other more traditional types of retail. There may be an opportunity for space sharing with a complementary type of business to drive this portion of the overhead costs down. Another important aspect of this business is marketing. Internet marketing and direct mailing to a customer database has been found to be more effective than traditional advertising.

- f. Food and agri-tourism: With 667 farms, 23% of Garrett County's land use is in agricultural production with the highest number of farms falling in the 50-179 acre range.³ There is an enthusiastic "Buy Local" movement that is working to increase awareness and sales throughout the county and region that is backed by the county's economic development office. The recommendation for this type of business is encompassed in Recommendation 5 above; however, if that project does not come to fruition, the community should pursue a business that can undertake a store similar to Firefly Farm and Creamery in Accident which manufactures its own goat cheese and retails it and other agricultural products in Accident's commercial district.
- g. Garrett College student-run coffee shop: This concept, as part of the College's entrepreneurship program, is experimental but would provide an exciting opportunity to teach entrepreneurship with hands on experience. A first step for this project is to engage in a conversation with the director of Garrett College's Entrepreneurship program to determine what parameters are necessary to get them involved. This could be funded in part by Workforce Investment funds as a training program for young entrepreneurs.
- h. On-line type of businesses that can have a retail presence: Because Friendsville has excellent broadband infrastructure, any type of internet based business that has a product that needs some back room storage space but also a small retail storefront location is an excellent candidate. An example of this is could be a gift basket company that sells "Made in Garrett County" gift baskets that needs a storage and assembly area, but also could support a small portion of retail space. A significant portion of sales may be internet based which generates enough revenue to maintain the storefront.

1. Bicycling Means Business: The Economic Benefits of Bicycle Infrastructure, by Darren Flusche, Policy Director, League of American Bicyclists.

2. Gaps/Opportunities: Garrett County Local Foods Distribution Plan, Phase I Overview of the Garrett County Local Foods System, Downstream Strategies.

B. Housing Recommendations

Although housing does not necessarily fit into the scope of activities typically defined by a business recruitment and retention plan for a community, it is apparent that Friendsville needs to attract a younger population in order to maintain its economic vitality. In addition, the local elementary school is under threat of closure as its enrollment numbers have declined over time. The community views the school as one of its greatest assets, and one that needs to be protected.

1. Advocate for Garrett Community Action Committee to buy, redevelop and add additional units to the Guardian Apartments. The complex contains 26 units of Section 8 subsidized housing for families who pay no more than 30% of their family adjusted gross income in rent. This recommendation results from two concerns:
 - An increase in the amount of crime that appears to be emanating from this complex. There have been concerns that the management of the complex is not addressing issues of community safety.
 - A need to retain and attract more families to the community. By placing the complex under new management, making physical improvements and additions, this will likely result in the retention and addition of families that will stabilize the elementary school enrollment
2. Actively participate in the county's housing demonstration program to attract new residents. The County Commission, in partnership the State of Maryland, is actively developing a new program to provide home ownership incentives to families who work in Garrett County or adjacent employment centers. This program will combine down payment assistance with favorable mortgage terms, and possible tax credits or rebates. This initiative is seen as a way to assist in the revitalization of the county's municipalities by requiring that the housing address a blighted or vacant property within the municipal boundaries. Friendsville should aggressively pursue participation in this program by undertaking the following steps:
 - Work with local property owners who are selling their property to secure control of the site(s) in order to market the property to families outside the community;

- Seek county funds or other funding to secure one year options on available houses and lots so they can be marketed;
- Target the employees of major employers including those in Morgantown and Preston County to market the home site; and
- Actively promote optioned properties to these employees.

The following pictures illustrate how a vacant lot can be transformed into a site for family housing. A program like this can add several new families to the community and contribute to the stabilization of the elementary school and local economy.



Vacant lot in residential area



Illustration of infill housing on same vacant lot



C. Public Improvement and Policy Recommendations

- I. Advocate for completion of the trail system linking Friendsville to the Eastern Continental Divide Loop Trail (ECDLT). The ECDLT is Garrett County's 150 mile vision for a trail system that will link the county to the Great Allegheny Passage Trail that runs from Pittsburgh, PA to Cumberland, MD. The ECDLT vision is being executed by the nonprofit Garrett Trails organization. Garrett Trails works to complete sections of the trail where there is local support and enthusiasm for the trail system. A map of the ECDLT is provided in Appendix C.

Friendsville's elected officials, business community, and residents should enthusiastically endorse the completion of the ECDLT because of the potential economic impact that the trail system can bring to local business. A recent economic impact study of the Great Allegheny Passage showed that visitors from all over the country spend money on the trail. Business owners along the Great Allegheny Passage attributed one-quarter of their gross revenue directly to trail users. On average, overnight trail users spent \$98 per day in the trail communities and on lodging.² And as mentioned earlier in the report, over one-third of the overnight trail users reported household incomes of \$100,000 or more.

The Ohiopyle case study demonstrates the popularity of biking and its economic impact on the community. Of the thousands of the people who visit Ohiopyle for outdoor recreation, only 10% come for rafting. The rest are there for the hiking and biking activities along the trail system. With this said, Friendsville should immediately undertake the following steps to advocate for completion of their portion of the trail system:

Kendall Trail – Swallow Falls Completion:

Immediately advocate for the completion of the section of trail from the Kendall Trail trailhead south 5 miles to Swallow Falls. The opportunity to complete this section is time sensitive. This portion of the trail goes through the Wild and Scenic River Corridor, and the Maryland DNR has been reluctant to open a trail through this section of the river. However, the current Governor is very interested in trail development and, if persuaded, may be a strong ally in getting this section done. From Swallow Falls the ECDLT will still need to be connected to various other sections around the county, but this would be a major leg of the trail completed that would give hikers and bikers access to a decent amount of trail starting at Friendsville.

Town Parking Lot-Selbysport Completion:

This section of the trail will take Friendsville one step closer to connecting with the Allegheny Passage at Confluence. This portion of the trail requires a northerly route that starts at the Town's new parking lot and ends at Selbysport where trail users will need to cross the river to Confluence (an inexpensive water taxi system has been proposed to address the crossing issue). This portion of the trail can take three different routes in town including two alternatives that require accessing private and Corps of Engineers land, and crossing the river over a constructed bridge. The bridge construction alone is estimated at \$1 million and is considered too costly to undertake.

The preferred route entails developing a trail across Maple Street from the parking lot through the field that runs alongside the river, ending at Selbysport. This is the least costly route as it does not require crossing the river. It does require getting a 5-8 foot access easement or right of way through private property.

Determining an acceptable route should be of the highest priority for the community.

A natural group to advocate for this work is the Friendsville Trail Alliance which has representation on the Garrett Trail organization. This group should take the lead and should be asked to advocate strongly for the completion of these two sections of trail.

4. Bicycling Means Business: The Economic Benefits of Bicycle Infrastructure, by Darren Flusche, Policy Director, League of American Bicyclists.



2. Review the town's zoning ordinance related to ground floor use of space. Currently, there are several ground floor spaces being used for storage. This presents an unsightly image and occupies valuable real estate with unproductive uses. Also there are some commercial ground floor spaces that have been converted to apartments also which limits the amount of space available for new business opportunities. A thorough review of the zoning ordinance should be conducted in conjunction with the county's planning office to address this situation with a goal of establishing the highest and best use for ground floor commercial space.

The evaluation of the zoning ordinance should also include a review of any barriers that might impede business development or the mixed use of properties. In a town the size of Friendsville, zoning should support the needs of small businesses by minimizing parking requirements; and encourage housing options in upper floors to make buildings more economically feasible for investment.

3. Provide assistance with upgrades to building facades and signage for property owners or businesses seeking to make improvements: As an incentive to new business owners or to existing owners who want to make improvements to the image of their business, a small pool of funds should be established to assist with exterior building improvements including signage. However, these improvements should be done in accordance with guidelines that should be established that focus on appropriate modifications for the style and size of the buildings in Friendsville.

The following rendering is an example of façade improvements that can be made to the a current vacant building on Maple Street that would enhance the marketability of this commercial space. The work scope for improvements is provided in Appendix D.

4. Advocate for a long term water and sewer infrastructure plan for Friendsville. The continual problems experienced by infill and infiltration in the sewer system have been addressed with short term fixes by the county. Most recently, the improvements made have freed up 25 new sewer taps for future development. However, beyond these, the future is uncertain. It is difficult for the Town to truly develop a long term plan for its growth and development without know what the long term "fix" is for this critical infrastructure. The Town leadership should strongly advocate for the development of a long term plan to address these issues.

5. Focus minimal public and private improvements on the intersection of Maple and Water Streets. It is not necessary to undertake these improvements in order to launch a successful business retention and recruitment program, but if public dollars are being spent on improvements such as decorative lighting or banners, this is location that should be targeted. If this is done, building owners should be encouraged to make small improvements as well such as banners, and new business signage. The following rendering shows how this intersection can look with very minor improvements. It also shows how the building at 272 Maple Street, proposed location of the agriculture and arts facility, can look when its façade is renovated in a historically sensitive manner.



D. Marketing Recommendations

1. Consider rebranding the town with a new logo and slogan that depicts the outdoor recreation and family friendly atmosphere of the community. Develop a Community Brand Team (the "CBT" or "Team") that will serve many roles in the development and maintenance of a brand for the Town. The Team will assist with developing a:
 - Brand that will represent the outdoor recreation, tourist focus, and small town charm for current and potential residents; and
 - Brand promise that will answer the following questions: What business are we really in? What do we provide? What differentiates our product from the competition? What do we do better than anyone else? What does the brand stand for and what does it offer to your targeted customers?
 - Brand logo. Many communities with limited budgets: work with a local college/university graphic design department as a semester class project for the design of a logo; sponsor a logo competition offering a small prize and recognition (seeking talent from local colleges/universities and arts community).
2. Enhance the Town's website <http://www.visitfriendsville.org/>. The following improvements should be made to assist with marketing the town.
 - Add marketing information on business opportunities including an inventory of commercial properties and lots. The building and lot inventory sheets can be customized for the type of information that is important for each property and/or for the businesses that you are attempting to recruit. An example of an inventory form can be found in Appendix E and as follows.
 - Post a directory of businesses. The website should include every business in and around Friendsville and be updated regularly. For example, it would include businesses with a Friendsville address such as Deep Creek Cellars, Chanteclair Farm and School House Earth. The directory should also include the museum, the library, City Hall, the Community Park and other sites that would be of interest to the public.
 - Post information regarding the new homeownership finance program with available property listings. Work in partnership with local realtors to feature "The Friendsville House of the Month" and also put a link to Trulia (www.trulia.com) and Zillow (www.zillow.com) to enable an easy search of Friendsville properties.
 - Post promotional packages (see Recommendation C.2 below). The promotional packages could be "explore itineraries" based on traveler's interest. Itineraries could be "Outdoor Adventures, Taste Tour, Historic Tour and incorporate Friendsville businesses.
 - Significantly pair down the photographs to depict important places and events. Select categories to assist you in trimming the inventory of pictures. For example: Community life, river activities, historic assets, diversity (children, singles, seniors, etc.) hiking, or unique business. The Town might consider the services of a professional photographer that can provide photography within predetermined subjects. The use of a professional photography will assure pictures are of the best quality (lighting, models, and creativity) and therefore will tell the Friendsville story much better on the website.

1 445 Caillavet Street



Property Description

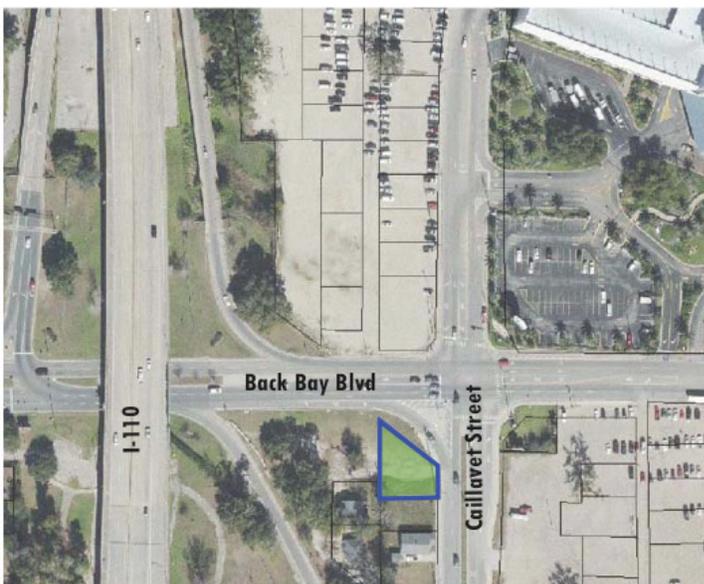
Building Type: Vacant Lot
 Building Size: N/A
 Building Height/Stories: 80 ft max
 Property Size: 0.26 Acres
 Zoning: RB - Regional Business
 Parking: N/A
 Building Condition: N/A
 Sale Price: \$200,000
 Lease Price: N/A
 Property Contact: Mike McMurray (228) 314-5025



What could I use this property for?

- Retail
- Office
- Residential
- Mixed Use
- Restaurant & Bar
- Entertainment
- Casino
- Park/Recreational
- Other _____

My Notes



Biloxi Investors Summit 2013

Friendsville, MD Search Min Price to Max Price All Beds All Baths More Filters

47 Results Friendsville Real Estate & Homes For Sale

Sort by: Featured Save search List Map

NEW
11735 Friendsville Rd **\$163,500**
 Friendsville, MD 21531 | \$771/mo Get Prequalified with Wells Fargo
 2 bd 2.5 ba 986 sqft / 2.0 acres lot
 Single-Family Home
 Garrett Land Sales, PC View Details

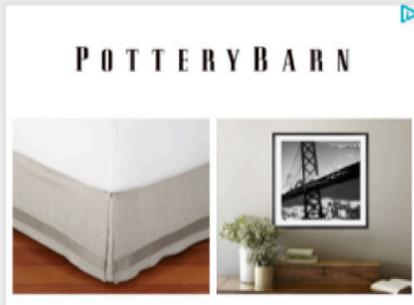
Most Viewed homes in this area:

- \$163,500**
11735 Friendsville Rd
2bd, 2.5ba, 986sqft
- \$389,000**
6301 Friendsville Rd
3bd, 2.5ba, 1568sqft
- \$219,000**
1086 Friendsville Rd
3bd, 1ba, 1248sqft
- \$108,900**
394 Cherry Lane Rd
1bd, 1ba

247 Maple St **\$225,000**
 Friendsville, MD 21531 | \$1,061/mo Get Prequalified with Wells Fargo
 4 bd 2 ba 3,268 sqft
 Single-Family Home
 Vintage Victorian Home, formerly Doctors Home and Office. Small town setting with lots of recreation opportunitie ...
 View Details

6301 Friendsville Rd **\$389,000**
 Friendsville, MD 21531 | \$1,834/mo Get Prequalified with Wells Fargo
 3 bd 2 ba 1,568 sqft
 Single-Family Home
 Picture yourself on the large front deck of this solidly crafted log cabin overlooking the Youghiogheny River Wil ...
 1 Real Estate Source LLC View Details

928 White Rock Crosscut Rd **\$208,000**
 Friendsville, MD 21531 | \$981/mo Get Prequalified with Wells Fargo
 3 bd 2 ba 1,000 sqft
 Single-Family Home
 Own a piece of Country! Home completely gutted and remodeled in 2013. This home offers 3 bedrooms/2 baths, main f ...



Ask a question about

Ask agents or local experts anything
 Get an answer

Local Real Estate Info

- Trends for Friendsville Real Estate
- Compare local home prices: Heat Map
- Friendsville Apartments for rent

3. Business Recruitment Marketing

- Meet with existing Friendsville business owners to explain current opportunities and get business retention ideas. Retaining Friendsville businesses should be considered a high priority and economic incentives and programming should be developed in response to Friendsville's businesses' needs.
- Develop simple marketing materials on benefits of locating in town. These materials need to include basic demographic information and highlighting tourism economic impact. Also highlight a successful existing Friendsville business, a map that illustrates Town location and the fact that it is located on I-68 and also financial incentives or resources available to new businesses.
- Visit businesses within one hour to determine interest in second location. Small successful business owners often explore multiple locations in close proximity to their "flagship" business. Larger communities to look for these businesses could be Morgantown, Cumberland, Frederick and Uniontown.
- Post information where boaters can see the opportunities. Each year, over 3,000 boaters visit Friendsville and that creates an opportunity for the Town to promote business opportunities to these visitors. The boaters can become a "sales force" for Friendsville to carry the message to potential business people or property investors.
- Use special events (Friendsville Days, reunions, etc.) to market opportunities to visitors. Have business marketing materials at an informational table and if possible have an existing business owner or City Council member available to answer any questions.
- Work closely with SBDC program to market sites and opportunities. Schedule a quarterly meeting with the regional SBDC representative so that Friendsville can give timely updates on business opportunities that can be shared with SBDC clients.
- Engage with business organizations and programs. The Town of Friendsville needs to be actively involved with the Garrett County Chamber of Commerce and other business organizations and county activities. The Chamber provides support to local businesses and promotes tourism in Garrett County. The Chamber hosts networking events, Business After Hours receptions, workshops and seminars that also would encourage Friendsville growth. Friendsville should look for additional engagement with other organizations or initiatives that could encourage or support business recruitment and retention.
- Complete an "Available Properties" inventory and promote on the town and other websites. The building and lot inventory should include all available sites and updated on a monthly basis. Photographs, square footage, building features and other details should be included on the individual inventory sheets. See attached inventory sheet in Appendix C.
- Consider the feasibility of small business incentives such as tax abatement, façade and signage grants and work closely with the SBDC representative to strengthen existing businesses. Communities develop economic incentives to encourage new business and to assist existing businesses. As you develop your town's incentives identify the barriers that are preventing businesses from locating in Friendsville. Also, what help can you provide for your existing businesses. For example, a town might offer a sign grant to businesses if most of their signage is outdated and not consistent with the buildings and the barrier is businesses do not have the funds to improve their signage.
- Expand a cottage industry (with internet based businesses – similar to Windrush Online.com and Asian Oils) with the asset of high speed internet. Friendsville has the asset of having high speed internet and this should be promoted to encourage more internet based businesses to locate in town. Many entrepreneurs with internet businesses could be attracted due to fast broadband and interstate access.

- Internet Marketing Linked to Social Media: Retain consulting assistance to run information about the town, including business recruitment content, through google paid search engine, Facebook ads, etc. to target low-cost cold prospects. Those that click through to get the information are automatically tracked by social networks and segmented into interested audience groups, which are then advertised in a more personal and targeted manner at a slightly higher cost, but much higher conversion rate and much more effectively than advertising to cold traffic. The ultimate goal being to use a smaller advertising budget to create a very targeted prospect list for the town to reach out for on a more personal level, saving time and escalating the marketing process much more quickly.

4. Tourism Marketing

- Develop a Friendsville tourist rack card to be distributed via hotel/realty companies' front desks and the CVB visitor center. Also, contract with private rack card vendors to place the cards in their racks. The rack card should reflect the town's new branding and mirror the redesign of the town's website and any other marketing materials. Designing a rack card requires graphic design expertise due to the methods of distribution (stacked in display with other competing cards), and therefore should be professional designed.
- Develop cross-promotional activities between businesses in the community and market these on the website. As an example, package the Riverside Hotel with Ken's Irish Pub and a tour of the Friend Family Museum. Involve your businesses in the planning of this activity as they know their businesses and can possibly add services or goods that will round out the cross-promoting.
- Place a paid advertisement in the 2016 CVB Activities Guide highlighting Friendsville (use the same design/style as the rack card). The ad should have the same look as the rack card and other marketing materials. All marketing activities should have the same colors, graphics and appearance to reinforce the branding.

- Have representation on the Chamber of Commerce Board and become active with the CVB. Friendsville should have more interaction with the Chamber and other county organizations and agencies. Partnerships and cooperation will benefit Friendsville. The town will increase its human and financial resources by these new partnerships.

5. Marketing to Attract New Residents

- Have representation on the Hazelton Prison Warden's Community Advisory Board and prepare a Welcome Packet for new prison staff highlighting affordable housing, low crime rate and excellent schools. The town should request twice a year to do a presentation at the Warden's Recall meetings that involve all the prison leadership.
- Work with Garrett College, Frostburg University and West Virginia University's HR Departments to be alerted of new faculty or staff hiring and relocation. Develop a brochure promoting Friendsville's excellent schools, low crime rate and the wrap around daycare at the elementary school and the National Blue Ribbon High School. Friendsville could become the town where area college faculty and staff settle and purchase homes. (Insert housing program that Duane announced at the meeting).
- Host an "Open House" for local lenders and realtors to remind them of the affordable housing in Friendsville for families or first time home buyers (host in an available house). This activity could occur during another community event such as the Christmas Home Tour, to build interest.

IV. Implementation

A. Organizational Oversight

In order to successfully execute the projects and initiatives in this plan, the community must organize itself in a way that:

- Spreads the work across a broad base of volunteers
- Facilitates good communication between all members of the implementation team
- Takes advantage of the professional staff and administrative support within the county
- Integrates representation from the Town Council and residents.

With these objectives in mind, it is recommended that a citizen group be formed to oversee the implementation of the plan. It is not necessary for the organization to be incorporated, but if it is so desired, it should be incorporated as a private nonprofit charitable organization with the IRS 501(c)(3) designation in order to receive charitable donations.

The organization should include representatives of both the Town Council and area businesses, as well residents. In order to spread the work load, the work should be organized into project based committees that are created according to the prioritization of tasks defined in the following section.

Since the following section defines the lead and supporting partners involved in the implementation of the plan, a proposed name, Friendsville Community Partnership (FCP), will be given to the proposed organization just for the purpose of identifying it in the matrix below.

The FCP will need to rely on staff support from not only the County, but other organizations such as the Garrett Community Action Committee's circuit riders, and the Chamber of Commerce tourism and heritage management programs.

If the FCP chooses to not organize as a nonprofit corporation, it is recommended that the Garrett Community Action Committee be appointed as the organization's fiscal agent for grants and other funds.

B. Project Prioritization

In this section, recommendations are made for high priority projects that should be undertaken in Years 1-2. In addition, the lead partner and supporting partner(s) are identified along with potential funding sources.

The High Priority projects are further defined into immediate action steps that are necessary in order to begin the project. This will assist the committees in understanding their role and how to get started.

Implementation Plan: High Priority Initiatives

Initiative	Immediate Tasks	Lead Partner	Supporting Partner(s)	Funding Source(s)
BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT				
Assist existing businesses	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Survey businesses to determine needs 2. Determine appropriateness of group & individual assistance 3. Organize group trainings 4. Facilitate one-on-one training. 	FCP	SBDC, Garrett College, NCIF County Economic Development Office	Free USDA Rural Business Development Grant USDA Microentrepreneur Assistance Program Grant Community Legacy/Sustainable Grants Garrett County ED office
Secure the Unique Mill site for redevelopment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a brief description of proposed use. 2. Meet with representatives of BFS to present proposal and determine feasibility of project. 3. If positive result, retain A/E services to identify costs for restoration. 4. Develop a business plan to project operating revenue and expenses and develop management plan. 5. Seek redevelopment and operating funds. 	FCP	Chamber of Commerce-Heritage Program (Director of Heritage Area – Jen Durben) County Economic Development Office, Preservation Maryland State of MD Sustainable Communities Grant Southern States Cooperative	Preservation Maryland Feasibility Study & Structural Assessment Grant \$1,000-\$10,000 Deadline: February 15, 2016 Maryland Historic Trust Heritage Area Grants: Large Grant 1 to 1 Match Total Grant Funds available in 2015 \$1 million available for statewide grants CDBG Economic Development Funds – Section 108 Loan Guarantee Program
Develop an Artisan Cooperative/Community Kitchen with Retail Component	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Contact Garrett County Arts Council to seek assistance with identification of potential artists. 2. Secure building location at —Maple Street 3. Develop operating plan including revenue & expense projections. 4. Seek funds for building renovation & fixtures. 	FCP	Garrett Arts Council Garrett College Frostburg State University	Appalachian Regional Commission National Endowment of the Arts Grant Programs: Art Works Matching grants generally range from \$10,000 to \$100,000. Deadline: possibly February 19, 2016 Challenge America To support projects that extend the reach of the arts to underserved populations. Matching grants are for \$10,000. Deadline: possibly April 16, 2016 Our Town Organizations may apply for creative placemaking projects that contribute to the livability of communities and place the arts at their core. Matching grants range from \$25,000 to \$200,000. Deadline possibly September 2016 USDA Rural Cooperative Development Grant for an organized art cooperative

Initiative	Immediate Tasks	Lead Partner	Supporting Partner(s)	Funding Source(s)
HOUSING				
Attract new families	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop and maintain an inventory of available houses and lots. 2. Incorporate a description of the county's housing program and community amenities into a marketing piece. 3. Make a list of regional employers and meet with HR departments. 4. Increase home ownership 	FCP	Local Realtors and Brokers County ED Office	Community Legacy/Sustainable Grants available for increasing homeownership GCCAC
Develop a Welcome Packet	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Packet should include: Mayor Welcome Letter; History of the town, phone numbers, contact information and brief description for Town officials, departments and emergency contacts, utilities, trash, recycling, voting/polls, tax collection, schools, churches, library and business licensing. Also a copy of the business directory, community calendar of events and any other materials that new residents should know about Friendsville 2. Distribute through local realtors, HR departments of regional employers (such as Federal Correction Institute), Chamber of Commerce 3. Participate in Advisory Boards for employers as appropriate. 4. Host Friendsville Open Houses for realtors. 	FCP	Local Realtors and Brokers Town staff	Co-sponsor the Garrett County Board of Realtors or local churches

Initiative	Immediate Tasks	Lead Partner	Supporting Partner(s)	Funding Source(s)
PUBLIC IMPROVEMENT AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS				
Advocate for expansion of the Town's trail system in order to link to the county's trail system (Eastern Continental Divide Loop Trail) and ultimately to the Great Allegheny Passage.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. South Connection: Lobby the State of MD to allocate the resources to complete Kendall trail to Swallow Falls. 2. North Connection: Approach the property owner across the street from the large parking lot to allow a 5-8 foot right-of-way through her field along the river in order to access the Corps of Engineers property across from the Community Park. 	Town	FCP Garrett Trails	MD DNR, Garrett County Commission
Review zoning ordinance for appropriate ground floor uses.		Town	County Planning Department	No cost
COMMUNITY AND TOURISM MARKETING				
Explore rebranding	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Brand should represent outdoor recreation, tourist focus and also small town charm and family based lifestyle found in Friendsville. 2. Create a "Brand Team" that will approve final design and insure that the brand messaging is consistent. 	FCP	CVB County Economic Development Office	Chamber Heritage Mini-grant In-kind donation from a local graphic company
Improve community website	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Engage a professional web graphic/design company to incorporate town's branding. 2. Include information about tourism and business opportunities. Also include information or links to residential properties. 	FCP	County Economic Development Office	Work with a class at Frostburg State University in Communications Study to design a website for the town as a semester project
Inventory available commercial space	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop an inventory form that describes the property including photo(s). Include: address, size, zoning, contact information, terms 2. Contact local realtors and owners with property for rent or sale and incorporate information into forms. 3. Post on town website 	FCP	County Economic Development Office Area Realtors	

Initiative	Immediate Tasks	Lead Partner	Supporting Partner(s)	Funding Source(s)
Develop a rack card and ad for the 2016 Activities Guide	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rack card and ad should reflect town's new branding; colorful photography, graphics should mirror website. 2. Utilize a professional graphic company to assist with design expertise. 3. Distribute at county Visitor Center and at hotel and rental front desks. 	FCP	Chamber of Commerce In-kind donation from a local graphic design company	Heritage Mini-grant \$2,000 maximum grant (1 to 1 match) Co-op with local businesses on the back side of the rack card or a portion of the ad
Develop cross promotional packages	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify businesses that want to cooperate. 2. Plan promotions. 3. Establish schedule of promotions 4. Market through website, CVB, and consider adding to the rack card. 	FCP	FV Businesses Chamber of Commerce	Heritage Mini-grant \$2,000 maximum grant (1 to 1 match) Charge a nominal business participation fee to defer marketing expenses (\$25 - \$75)
BUSINESS RECRUITMENT MARKETING				
Develop materials to promote business opportunities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prepare a business recruitment packet that will include: basic demographic information, tourism impact information, maps and financial incentive programs. 	FCP	County Economic Development Office SBDC	Sponsorship from local banks that offer business financing
Post business opportunities on the parking lot kiosk and in vacant property windows	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop posters (utilize branding standards) that reflect Friendsville is "Open For Business Opportunities" 2. Design a similar poster for available retail locations "This Building is Not Empty – It's Full of Opportunities" 	FCP	County Economic Development Office, SBDC	
Complete an "Available Properties" inventory and promote on the town and other websites and distribute to local & regional realtors		FCP	County Economic Development Office	
Visit businesses within one hour to determine interest in second location			Tri-County Council Chamber of Commerce	Possible sponsor is the Oakland Rotary Club

Case Study of Three Comparable Towns

General

The following economic and comparison report will provide an overview of the businesses, financial incentive and challenges, as well as the tourism industries found in three small rural towns with populations below 700. Ohiopyle, PA a town governed by the Pennsylvania borough system along with Thomas, WV and Davis, WV who are under a Mayor-Council governing system will be highlighted.

Visitors, residents and businesses are attracted to Ohiopyle, Thomas, and Davis (The Towns), due to their surrounding natural beauty, unique cultural heritage, positive self-image, strong sense of civic pride, and built environments. The tourists visiting these towns only spend 1.5 – 2 hours shopping, dining or walking around, therefore limiting the opportunities to capture business. All these communities present an image that encourages a new or relocating business to consider them as a potential location. Currently in these towns, existing businesses are expanding and reinvesting due to their potential for even greater growth.

The Towns are all located on rural state routes that are bordered by rivers used for fishing, whitewater kayaking, rafting and paddling. The state routes create a challenge for The Towns with pedestrian and vehicular conflict. Each of The Towns has researched traffic calming techniques to address this issue. State Parks either are located within The Towns or in close proximity, so as to be considered part of the community. The Towns all have trail systems, at different stages of development, which are for hiking or mountain biking. The physical design of each of The Towns is congruent with visitors being able to transition from the business district to recreational areas with ease.

Business Mix & Make-up

The majority of business owners within each of The Towns are local residents or individuals who chose to relocate to small rural towns. Due to this the businesses in each of The Towns have an eclectic mix of retail, service and restaurants. Coupled with this eclectic mix is an underlying energy due to many of the businesses representing an underlying passion of their owner’s (e.g., painting, jewelry making, biking, or culinary). This passion is transformed into both their window and visual displays resulting in visitors wanting to explore the business districts.

Both, Thomas and Davis had successful artist cooperatives that added to their business mix. The cooperatives, due to the talents of the artists that were involved, had a variety of medias such as paintings, pottery, textile handcrafts, wood art, jewelry, soaps & scents, photography, and glassware. The cooperative business model in Thomas only involved (3-5) artists organized as for profit business, where as Davis’s cooperative had (25) artist operating within a non-profit structure.

Once visitors enter the businesses, friendly, informative, and welcoming staffs met them. Many of them have repeat customers due to the quality and uniqueness of their goods, menus and services and therefore are aware of the importance of customer service and the value of word of mouth on future sales. Some of the most popular businesses in each community are:

Ohiopyle	Thomas	Davis
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Falls Market General Store Oddly Enough Firefly Grill Falls City Restaurant & Pub 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> White Room Art Gallery Colabrese General Store Flying Pigs Tip Top Coffee House The Purple Fiddle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WV Highlands Artisans Group Wild Ginger and Spice Blackwater Bikes Sirianni’s Café

In all three communities, the commercial rents were affordable and therefore small businesses were able to thrive and survive. Several business owners commented, “Without really affordable rent, I would not be able to make it in business”. Several business owners reported that their current rent ranged from \$300 to \$500 a month.

Drivers for Business Location

As referenced below, the financial incentives for locating in these towns are minimal at best. However, there were several factors noted by business owners, particularly in Thomas, that impacted their decision to locate there or expand their businesses:

- **The presence of an anchor business.** In the case of Thomas, it is the Purple Fiddle, which draws customers seven days a week for food and live music. The Purple Fiddle with its eclectic customer base does an excellent job marketing itself not only in



Canaan Valley, but also within a 50 mile radius thus, drawing tourists and regional residents. In Davis, Sirianni's has much the same popularity and acts as an anchor for that town. In Ohioplye, the Falls Market General Store anchors the downtown with the business fronting both the river and the bike trail.

- **Ecotourism.** In each of The Towns river and biking recreational activities are the main ecotourism attractions. In Ohioplye they have found that 10% of visitors to their community come for the river activities and 90% for biking. Individuals interested in river and biking are often also drawn to camping. Each of The Towns and surrounding communities has ample camping facility to support their current customer base.
- **The availability of cheap rent.** Storeowners repeatedly said that without inexpensive rent (typically \$300 - \$500 per month for a storefront) they would not be able to survive. This is especially true for Thomas where the nature of the customer base still remains very seasonal.
- **Technical and financial support.** While The Towns themselves are not able to provide much in the way of technical and financial support, the Woodlands Community Development Corporation (CDC) has a strong presence in Thomas and Davis. This CDC assists business owners with financing and business development issues, and provides flexible terms to underwrite loans that are often less than desirable to traditional lenders.
- **Alternative lifestyles.** The business owners in these communities often are not only interested in financial gain. Many locate their businesses to The Towns to pursue their business interest and love of the natural environment in a laid back community that offers them the ability to operate with little regulation, overhead, and pressure.
- **Multi-business ownership.** The Towns all had business owners that expanded their businesses or created complementary stand-alone businesses. For example:

Sirianni's restaurant located in Davis is in process of opening a white table cloth restaurant in Thomas, Falls Market General Store, in Ohioplye, has expanded into bike rentals, Laurel Highland River outfitter, in Ohioplye, owned a hotel that catered to river and bicycling enthusiasts, and has just opened a zip line business.

- **User fees (revenue).** Ohioplye collects a concession fee on rafters (.50 per each rafter), that is then used for borough upkeep and maintenance, township road maintenance, park safety equipment, and lastly for town and business marketing.

Town Government Support

There are no financial incentives available for businesses through The Town governments. All The Towns' budgets are small and can only provide for town services. Business owners from The Towns did state, "even though the town can not financially assist us, they do not interfere with our businesses and they do respond with town services when requested". As expected, businesses see a decline in customers during the winter, especially Ohioplye, which does not have any winter sports activities.

Tourism

Each of The Towns appeals to outdoor enthusiasts and individuals who like to visit communities in which locally owned businesses are prevalent. All of The Towns are dependent on tourists, who are traveling to attractions such as Blackwater Falls, Canaan Valley, Fallingwater and the State Parks, as a large part of their customer base. Larger metro areas such as Washington, DC and Pittsburgh are the current tourists within The Towns.

Conclusions

These towns despite their size and remoteness have become unique, creative business centers that are utilizing their nature, outdoor recreational resources and the potential economic impact of these activities to put a foundation in place that supports small business. This nature-based place making involves the focus areas of: civic, tourism and business in the following ways: civic, where the focus is on education and emotion; tourism, where the focus is on hospitality and guest services; and business, where the focus is on shopping and entertainment.

APPENDIX B

Demographic and Economic Tables

Exhibit 2-1

Town and County Population Estimates

Place	1990	2000	2010	% Change 2000 - 2010
Garrett County	28,138	29,846	30,097	<1%
Friendsville	577	539	491	-9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; Terrell Ellis & Associates, Inc.

Exhibit 2-2

Town and County Household Trends

Place	Households			Size		
	1990	2000	2010	1990	2000	2010
Garrett County	10,110	11,476	12,057	2.70	2.55	2.45
Friendsville	222	232	219	2.60	2.32	2.24

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; Terrell Ellis & Associates, Inc.

Exhibit 2-3

Age Distribution: Garrett County and Friendsville, 1990 - 2010

Age	Garrett County			Friendsville		
	1990	2000	2010	1990	2000	2010
19 years and <	30%	28%	25%	29%	25%	22%
20 - 64 years	56%	57%	58%	55%	58%	62%
65 years and >	14%	15%	17%	16%	17%	16%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; Terrell Ellis & Associates, Inc.

Exhibit 2-4

Distribution of Household Incomes for Friendsville, 1990 - 2010

Income	1990	% of HH	2000	% of HH	2010	% of HH
< \$10,000	60	27%	61	26%	48	21%
\$10,000 - \$14,999	52	23%	17	7%	16	7%
\$15,000 - \$24,999	45	20%	45	19%	36	16%
\$25,000 - \$34,999	36	16%	43	18%	22	10%
\$35,000 - \$49,999	24	11%	27	11%	23	10%
\$50,000 - \$74,999	9	4%	23	10%	38	16%
\$75,000 - \$99,999	0	0%	8	3%	29	13%
\$100,000 - \$149,999	0	0%	7	3%	19	8%
> \$150,000	0	0%	7	3%	0	0%
Total	226	100%	238	100%	231	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; Terrell Ellis & Associates, Inc.

Exhibit 2-5

Distribution of Household Incomes for Garrett County, 1990 - 2010

Income	1990	% of HH	2000	% of HH	2010	% of HH
< \$10,000	2,046	20%	1,459	13%	934	8%
\$10,000 - \$14,999	1,239	12%	1,054	9%	781	6%
\$15,000 - \$24,999	2,248	22%	1,895	17%	1,558	13%
\$25,000 - \$34,999	1,802	18%	1,814	16%	1,377	11%
\$35,000 - \$49,999	1,380	14%	1,936	17%	2,008	16%
\$50,000 - \$74,999	1,076	11%	1,975	17%	2,524	21%
\$75,000 - \$99,999	189	2%	710	6%	1,515	12%
\$100,000 - \$149,999	54	1%	406	4%	1,160	9%
> \$150,000	67	1%	221	2%	429	3%
Total	10,101	100%	11,470	100%	12,286	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; Terrell Ellis & Associates, Inc.

Exhibit 2-6

Employment Trends and Changes by Major Industry for Friendsville, 1990 - 2010

Industry	1990	% of Total	2000	% of Total	2010	% of Total	% Change 2000 -2010
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, mining	9	5%	16	7%	0	0%	-1600%
Construction	17	9%	37	16%	51	21%	27%
Manufacturing	59	30%	25	11%	18	7%	-39%
Transportation/ Communications Public Utilities	11	6%	18	8%	0	0%	-1800%
Information	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0%
Wholesale Trade	5	3%	6	3%	6	2%	0%
Retail Trade	18	9%	38	17%	29	12%	-31%
FIRE	4	2%	2	1%	11	4%	82%
Health and Education Related Services	43	22%	53	23%	68	28%	22%
Public Administration	5	3%	8	4%	4	2%	-100%
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation Services, Food, Lodging	0	0%	18	8%	36	15%	50%
Other Services ⁵	23	12%	5	2%	22	9%	77%
Total	194	100	226	100	245	75	NA

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; Terrell Ellis & Associates, Inc.

5. The Other Services (except Public Administration) sector comprises establishments engaged in providing services not specifically provided for elsewhere in the classification system. Establishments in this sector are primarily engaged in activities, such as equipment and machinery repairing, promoting or administering religious activities, grantmaking, advocacy, and providing drycleaning and laundry services, personal care services, death care services, pet care services, photofinishing services, temporary parking services, and dating services.

Exhibit 2-7

Employment Trends and Changes by Major Industry for Garrett County, 1990 - 2010

Industry	1990	% of Total	2000	% of Total	2010	% of Total	% Change 2000 - 2010
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, mining	1157	10%	854	7%	627	4%	-36%
Construction	1145	10%	1371	10%	1811	13%	24%
Manufacturing	2062	18%	1624	12%	1244	9%	-31%
Transportation/ Communications Public Utilities	715	6%	742	6%	1132	8%	34%
Information	0	0%	388	3%	274	2%	-42%
Wholesale Trade	330	3%	313	2%	291	2%	-8%
Retail Trade	2124	18%	1468	11%	1361	9%	-8%
FIRE	458	4%	613	5%	779	5%	21%
Health and Education Related Services	1713	15%	2594	20%	2804	19%	7%
Public Administration	476	4%	742	6%	819	6%	9%
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation Services, Food, Lodging	99	1%	1059	8%	1355	9%	22%
Other Services	1469	13%	1301	10%	1933	13%	33%
Total	11748	100%	13069	100%	14430	100%	9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; Terrell Ellis & Associates, Inc.

Exhibit 2-8

Number of Establishments and Employees by Major Sector for Garrett County, 2010-2013

Industry	# of Establishments 2010	# of Establishments 2013	Change	# of Employees 2010	# of Employees 2013
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting	18	16	-2	43	39
Mining, quarrying, oil & gas extraction	9	11	2	325	345
Utilities	2	3	1	20-99	20-99
Construction	178	150	-28	1,072	668
Manufacturing	46	48	2	1,027	1,157
Wholesale Trade	29	28	-1	277	194
Retail Trade	149	139	-10	1,758	1,664
Transportation and Warehousing	41	46	5	396	354
Information	15	15	0	100-249	343
Finance and Insurance	36	35	-1	360	345
Real Estate, rental and leasing	36	39	3	271	291
Professional, scientific, and technical services	56	55	-1	250-499	250-499
Management of companies and enterprises	4	4	0	20-99	20-99
Administrative & support & waste management & remediation services	49	45	-4	564	500-999
Educational services	6	7	1	39	20-999
Health care & social assistance	76	73	-3	1,658	1,715
Arts, entertainment & recreation	18	16	-2	500-999	20-99
Accommodation & food service	70	80	10	1,038	1,193
Other services	99	96	-3	500-999	1,000-2,499

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; Terrell Ellis & Associates, Inc.

Exhibit 2-9

Garrett County Tourism Industry Sales, 2009-2013 (millions)

Sector	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	% Change 2009-2013
Lodging	\$34	\$36.3	\$40.1	\$43.3	\$45.9	26%
Food & Beverage	\$36.4	\$37	\$41.2	\$45.1	\$50.8	28%
Retail	\$23.7	\$24.6	\$28.4	\$30.7	\$34.9	32%
Recreation	\$53.9	\$51.5	\$55.2	\$55.7	\$65	17%
Transport	\$44	\$45.9	\$56.8	\$61.8	\$68.6	36%
Second Homes	\$24.6	\$25.3	\$29.4	\$32.6	\$34.2	28%

Source: Garrett County Chamber of Commerce; Terrell Ellis & Associates, Inc

Exhibit 2-10

Number of Housing Units, Garrett County and Friendsville, 1990 - 2010

Place	1990	2000	2010	% Change 2000 - 2010	2010 Vacancy
Garrett County	14,119	16,761	18,854	12.49%	36%
Friendsville	240	270	272	<1%	20%

Source: Garrett County Chamber of Commerce; Terrell Ellis & Associates, Inc

Exhibit 2-11

Housing Tenure Trends, Garrett County and Friendsville, 1990 -2010

Place	Owner Occupied				Renter Occupied			
	1990	2000	2010	% Change 2000-2010	1990	2000	2010	% Change
Garrett County	57%	78%	77%	-%	15%	22%	23%	-%
Friendsville	61%	57%	68%	16%	26%	43%	32%	-34%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; Terrell Ellis & Associates, Inc.

Exhibit 2-12

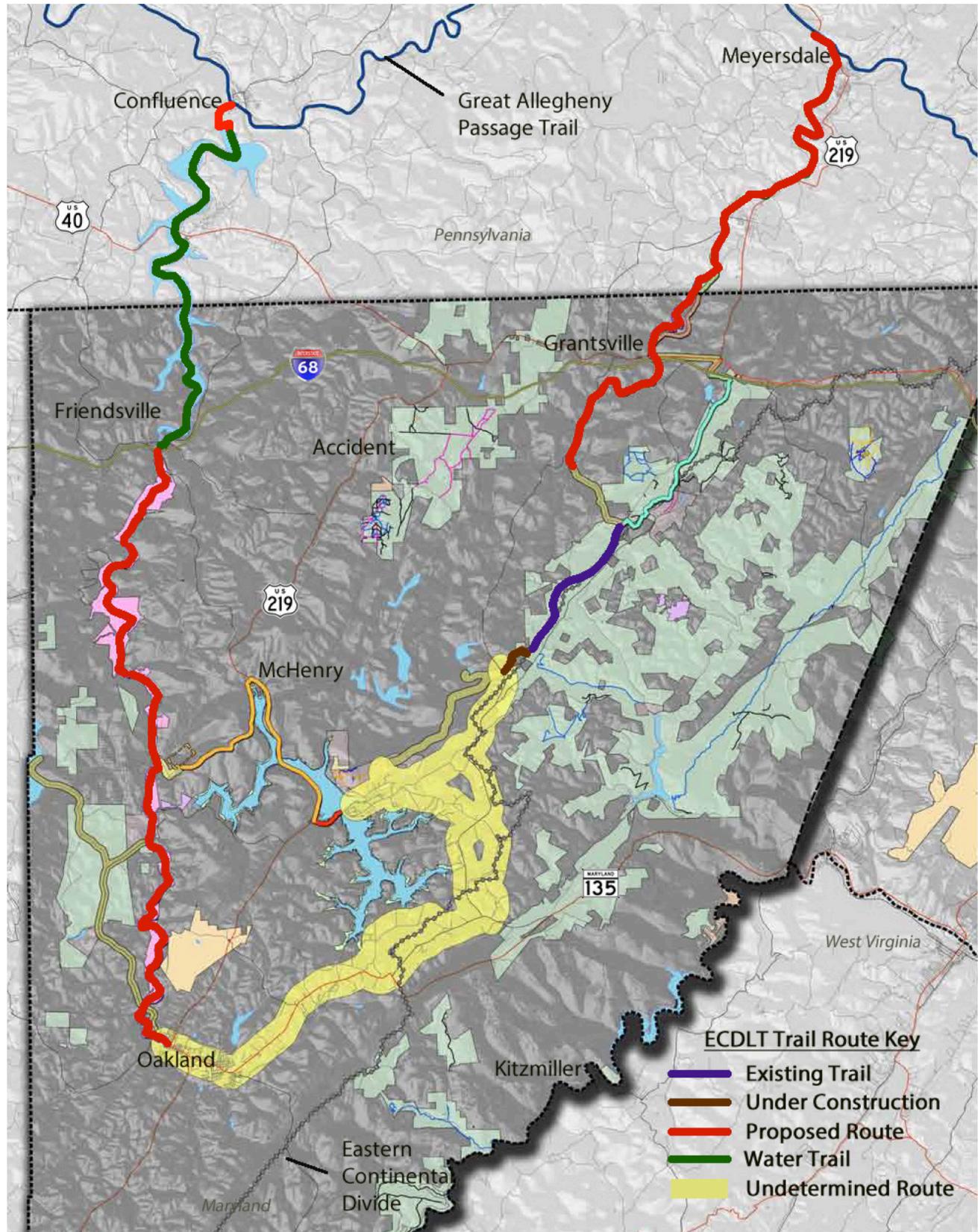
Median Housing Values, Garrett County and Friendsville, 1990 - 2010

Place	1990	2000	2010	2013	% change 2000-2013
Garrett County	86,400	159,000	169,400	168,600	5%
Friendsville	43,800	73,100	102,000	113,500	36%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; Terrell Ellis & Associates, Inc.

Eastern Continental Divide Trail Route

Proposed Trail Route for the ECDT



Façade Renovation Work Scope

Scope of Work for “Café” in Friendsville, Maryland

Upper Floor

- Paint accent stripe at top of building.
- Remove existing shutters.
- Paint upper façade.
- Paint accent stripe directly above upper floor windows; paint “box” around upper floor windows.
- Paint existing windows.
- Install vertical signage on upper floor at left corner. May be a banner or sign.
- Install “ribbon” style metal sign at cornice level with cut-out or applied metal lettering.

Lower Floor

- Remove existing canopy/roof.
- Paint accent stripe directly below upper floor windows.
- Remove existing aluminum framed entrance doors and replace with wood commercial doors.
- Paint “box” around entrance doors.
- Remove existing display windows. Install new display windows with transoms.
- Paint display window and transom framing.
- Install vertical corrugated metal on lower façade and paint.
- Install awnings over display windows and entrance doors.

Property Inventory Form

Downtown Friendsville Inventory

Basic Building Information

Street Location _____
 Vacant Available Occupied
 Lot / Parcel # _____
 Building # _____

Building Information

Building Name _____
 Building Address _____
 City _____ State ____ Zip _____
 Owner(s) _____
 Contact Name _____
 Contact Address _____
 City _____ State ____ Zip _____
 Contact Phone _____ Fax _____
 Contact Email _____
 Last Date of Sale _____ Sale Amount _____

BUILDING insured? YES NO

Other _____

Physical Characteristics

Zoning Type _____
 # of Floors _____
 # of Commercial Units _____ # in Use _____
 # of Residential Units _____ # in Use _____

Building Condition Poor Fair Good Very Good Excellent

Comments on Conditions _____

Space Information

Total Building Square Footage _____
Floor Usage
 Basement _____
 1st Floor _____
 2nd Floor _____
 3rd Floor _____
 4th & Above _____

Historic Information

Date of Construction _____
 Individual Register Listing: National Local
 District Listing: (If Yes, Check All That Apply)
 Contributing Non-Contributing Significant

Property Availability For Sale

Asking Price _____
 Realtor _____
 Email _____
 Realtor Phone _____

Business Information

Business Type Retail Service Mfg/Wholesale
 Non-profit/Church Gov't

Business Name _____
 Contact Name _____
 Mailing Address _____
 Business Phone _____ Fax _____
 Business Email _____
 Business Website _____
 Date Business Was Established _____
 Does the Business Own Rent Plan to Own the Space
 If Renting, What is the Monthly Rent _____
 Lease Ending Date _____ Term? _____

Business Classification

Business Description _____
 Niche/Specialty _____
 Primary Products _____

Business Hours

	Open	Close
Monday	_____	_____
Tuesday	_____	_____
Wednesday	_____	_____
Thursday	_____	_____
Friday	_____	_____
Saturday	_____	_____
Sunday	_____	_____

Employee Information

of Full-Time _____ # of Part-Time _____
 # of Seasonal _____

Parking for Employees (check box, enter number)

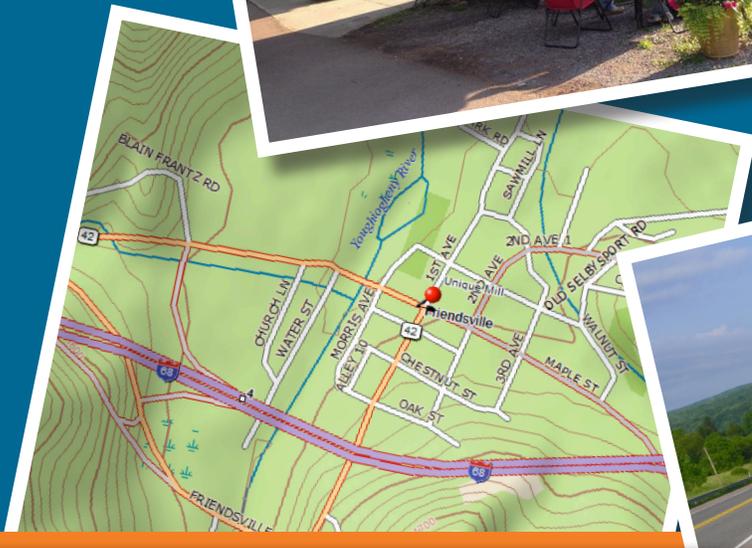
Private lot _____
 Public Off Street ____ On Street ____

Extra Information

Pay own utilities? Y ___ N ___ Notes _____
 Programmable thermostat? Y ___ N ___
 Display windows kept lit at night? Y ___ N ___ NA ___

Other Useful Information _____

Completed By _____	Date _____
Updated By _____	Date _____



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