

2 Background

2.1 Location, Regional Setting, Government

Garrett County is a rural county, and is the westernmost county in Maryland. It has an area of approximately 655 square miles and a 2005 population of approximately 30,200¹. North of Garrett County is Pennsylvania, to the west and south-east is West Virginia. Allegany County borders the county on the east (see Map 2.1). Approximately 90 percent of the County is comprised of resource lands, primarily forest and agricultural land. Approximately one-fifth of Garrett County is publicly held land, primarily state forests and state parks.

Oakland, one of eight municipalities (incorporated towns) in the county, serves as the county seat. The other municipalities are Accident, Deer Park, Friendsville, Grantsville, Kitzmiller, Loch Lynn Heights, and Mountain Lake Park. The towns make up just over 20 percent of the County's total population.

2.2 History

Garrett County was split off from Allegany County in 1872. The county is named for John Work Garrett, one-time president of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad.

Garrett County has a rich history as Maryland's gateway to the west and as a vacation and resort destination. In the years after the civil war John Garrett promoted the area and its easy access by railroad. The first resort was Deer Park, which opened its hotel in 1873. The Oakland Hotel followed and Mountain Lake Park and Loch Lynn Heights also developed as resort towns. These towns' resort heyday was the late 19th century when presidents and Baltimore-Washington high society vacationed in the area. Deep Creek Lake, created in 1923, quickly became a resort, first for residents of the Pittsburgh region, and later for the Baltimore and Washington, DC regions. With Deep Creek Lake, the Wisp Ski Resort, and numerous other recreational opportunities, Garrett County is sometimes referred to as "Maryland's mountaintop playground." Agriculture, timber, and coal mining are also important parts of the local economy, as well as historic and cultural traditions. More detail about Garrett County's history and heritage can be found in the Garrett County 2003 Heritage Plan (see below under Related Plans).

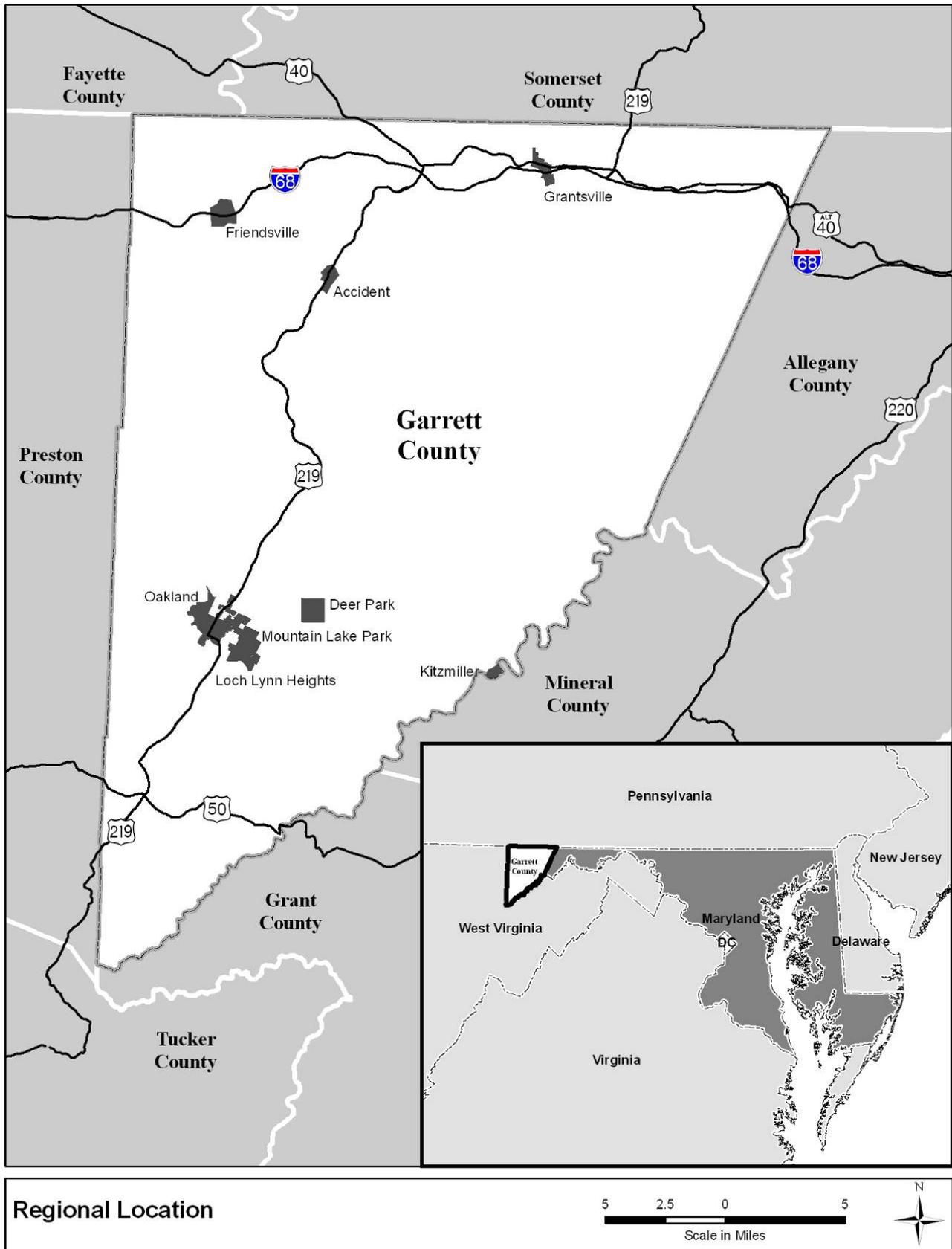
2.3 Planning History

Formal land use planning in Garrett County began in the 1970s, first with a plan for the Deep Creek Lake area in 1972. It was followed by the County's first comprehensive plan, "A *Development Plan for Garrett County*," which was adopted in 1974. This plan was replaced in 1995 by "A *New Development Plan for Garrett County*." The 1995 plan was reviewed by the Planning Commission in 2001.

¹ Please note that two boundary lines between Garrett County and Allegany County are recognized: the Chisholm Boundary and, slightly to the east, the Bowers Boundary. This Comprehensive Plan uses the Chisholm Boundary which results in a total county area approximately 5,600 acres less than if the Bowers Boundary were used. In early 2008, Garrett and Allegany Counties entered into a "friendly lawsuit" to resolve this boundary dispute.

Different agencies and data sources use different total areas for Garrett County (for example, the Maryland Department of Planning land use/land cover data set is based on the Bowers Boundary, while the Department of Assessment and Taxation uses the Chisholm boundary) based on their sources, interpretation of satellite imagery, legal descriptions, geographic information system polygon shapes and so on. Each dataset has its purposes and may have been used for different analyses in this Plan. As a result the reader may notice different acreage totals being used in different tables in this plan. The differences are minor and are of little importance at this comprehensive, large-scale level of planning.

Map 2.1: Location and Regional Setting



This 2008 Comprehensive Plan replaces the 1995 plan. The 1972 *Plan for the Deep Creek Lake Area* was replaced by the 1986 *Plan for the Deep Creek Lake Area*, and updated by the 1995 Garrett County Comprehensive Plan.

2.3.1 *Zoning and Subdivision*

In 1975, following the 1974 Comprehensive Plan, the County adopted a zoning ordinance to regulate land use in the Deep Creek watershed. The remainder of the County was not, and still is not subject to land use regulations.

In 1997, following the 1995 Comprehensive Plan, the County adopted a subdivision ordinance that regulates and controls the subdivision and development of land, but not the use of land, throughout the unincorporated part of the County.

The eight towns have their own planning authority and adopt their own comprehensive plans, zoning, and subdivision regulations.

2.4 **Related Plans and Documents**

The Comprehensive Plan influences and is influenced by companion plans and documents (and their amendments) that serve to implement the Plan:

- Deep Creek Watershed Zoning Ordinance. See previous section.
- Garrett County Subdivision Ordinance. See previous section.
- Comprehensive Water and Sewerage Plan. The Comprehensive Water and Sewer Plan guides the development of water supply and sewerage systems and facilities by implementing County growth and development policies. An update of this plan was scheduled to begin in summer 2007.
- Capital Plan. The annual Capital Plan relates the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan to implementation. It states which capital projects will be undertaken over the next five years and how they will be funded. The Comprehensive Plan is, in turn, important to the capital budgeting process because it outlines the location of future growth and identifies needed capital projects.
- Garrett County Public Schools Educational Facilities Master Plan (annual).
- County Solid Waste Management Plan, 2004
- Garrett County Housing Assessment Report, 2005
- Economic Development Strategic Plan, 2005 update.
- Garrett County Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan, 2005.

2.4.1 *Plans Incorporated by Reference*

Two additional plans are particularly important, because they were adopted specifically to inform the County's comprehensive planning program.

- Land Preservation Parks and Recreation Plan (LPPRP), 2005. This plan focuses on three types of County land resources: parks and recreation, agricultural lands, and natural resource lands. The plan identifies where these resources are located, how effective current implementation programs and funding sources are in protecting and conserving them, and recommends where changes are needed to overcome shortcomings, close gaps, achieve goals, and ensure good return on public investment.

- Garrett County Heritage Plan, 2003. This plan prepared by the Garrett County Heritage Committee describes the County’s heritage resources outlines a vision for capitalizing on these resources to increase visitation. Following plan adoption by the County Commissioners, the County became a state-designated “Recognized Heritage Area”.

These plans and their amendments are incorporated by reference into this 2008 Comprehensive Plan and have the same weight and authority as the Comprehensive Plan. For ease of reference, the text of these plans is provided in the Appendix to this Plan.

2.5 Population and Housing, Existing and Projected

As of 2005 Garrett County’s population was estimated at 30,150, a small increase over the population at the time of the 2000 census (Table 2.1)². The County had approximately 18,326 housing units in 2005. The population listed in Table 2.1 is the year-round population, that is, the number of full-time residents. However, Garrett County has a large number of seasonal (vacation) homes—almost 4,000 such units in 2000—which is why the number of housing units shown in Table 2.1 is large compared to the population.

Because of the County’s relatively small population, the effects of vacation homes and other types of visitation is pronounced, especially in the Deep Creek Lake area. For example, the peak-day population in the Deep Creek area in 2003 was estimated at 27,044, compared to a year round population in the Lake area of 4,246³. While these visitors and seasonal residents do not count toward the County’s year-round population, they often have the same impacts on traffic and transportation, drinking water, wastewater, and most community services (except education) as permanent residents. Therefore this Plan evaluates future growth in Garrett County primarily from the perspective of housing units, rather than population.

Table 2.1: Population and Housing, 2000, 2005, and 2030

Geography	2000 Census		2005 Estimate		2030 Projection	
	Population	Housing units	Population	Housing units	Population	Housing units
Towns	6,865	3,130	6,640	3,287	8,003	3,962
Accident	353	162	340	168	390	193
Deer Park	405	181	392	181	517	256
Friendsville	539	266	518	281	618	306
Grantsville	619	298	593	305	818	405
Kitzmilller	302	155	288	164	382	189
Loch Lynn Heights	469	202	449	210	475	235
Mountain Lake Park	2,248	948	2,164	1,017	2,357	1,167
Oakland	1,930	918	1,896	961	2,446	1,211
Unincorporated Area	22,981	13,631	23,310	15,039	25,397	21,114
Total County	29,846	16,761	29,950	18,326	33,400	25,076

Sources: US Census; Maryland Department of Planning; Garrett County.

Note: 2030 projections for the Towns are for population and housing units within 2007 boundaries.

The Comprehensive Plan’s countywide projections for population and housing are shown in Tables 2.1 and 2.2. The year-round population is projected to increase to 33,400 by 2030, an increase of approximately 3,450 persons, or 11 percent, over the total in 2005.⁴ During the

² Please note that the year 2005 is being used as the base year for most of the land use and growth analyses in the Comprehensive Plan. This allows data to be readily compared in an “apples to apples” manner.

³ Deep Creek Lake Boating Carrying Capacity Assessment, 2004.

⁴ Source: MDP, September 2006. http://www.mdp.state.md.us/msdc/popproj/TOTPOP_PROJ06.pdf

same period, Garrett County projects the number of housing units will increase to 25,076, a 37 percent increase over the number of units in 2005.

Table 2.2: Population and Household Projections, Five Year Increments

	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
Population	29,950	30,850	31,750	32,500	33,050	33,400
Households	11,850	12,325	12,850	13,325	13,725	14,000
Household Size	2.47	2.44	2.41	2.37	2.34	2.31

Source: Maryland Department of Planning 11-06

The housing unit projections are derived from analyses and public review conducted between November 2006 and February 2007 for the Comprehensive Plan⁵. These analyses considered a moderate growth and a rapid growth scenario for Garrett County. These scenarios were based on several considerations, including development trends since 1990, planned development (i.e., approved subdivisions), and anticipated market trends. The final projections in Table 2.1 reflect the moderate growth scenario, which the County believes is the more likely of the two scenarios to occur. A detailed description of the scenarios methodology is included in the Appendix to this Comprehensive Plan (Growth Projections Packet 020107).

The projections through 2030 assume the following, based on past trends, market observations, and the land use planning policies in this Plan:

- The Deep Creek Lake Area will absorb approximately 60 percent of housing unit growth, compared to 42 percent between 1990 and 2005.
- The Towns will absorb approximately 10 percent of housing unit growth, compared to 13 percent between 1990 and 2005, not counting possible growth through annexation.
- The rest of the County will absorb approximately 30 percent of housing unit growth, compared to 45 percent between 1990 and 2005.

2.5.1 Projections by Watershed

Garrett County has conducted its land use planning by watershed since the 1974 Comprehensive Plan. This 2008 Plan continues this watershed-based approach.

Table 2.3 shows the County’s housing unit projections by watersheds, towns, and sub-areas. The County contains all or portions of seven major (8-digit) watersheds⁶: Youghiogheny River; Little Youghiogheny River; Deep Creek; Casselman River; Savage River; North Branch Potomac River; and Georges Creek (Map 2.2). The first four all drain to the Youghiogheny River, which ultimately flows to the Mississippi River (via the Ohio River). The last three all drain to the North Branch Potomac River, and ultimately to the Chesapeake Bay. A very small area (approximately 143 acres) in the extreme northeast corner of the County is part of the Wills Creek watershed which lies mostly in Pennsylvania and in Allegany County, MD. This Comprehensive Plan counts this small area as part of the Savage River Watershed (consistent with current state watershed mapping).

⁵ This review included special coordination with the incorporated towns, which were given the opportunity to review and comment on preliminary draft projections in fall of 2006.

⁶ Watersheds are assigned unique numerical identifiers (for example, the Little Youghiogheny River is #05020202), and the number of digits refers to the size of the watershed. There are 138 large (8 digit) watersheds in Maryland, and each 8-digit watersheds is divided into several smaller (12-digit) watersheds.

The projections for each watershed are broken down by incorporated town and by the “remainder”, that is the unincorporated portion of the watershed. Three other geographic areas should be noted:

- The Deep Creek Lake Influence Area is the area around Deep Creek Lake that affects or is affected by the area’s resort activities, especially with respect to traffic and water and sewer. The influence area includes the entirety of the Deep Creek Watershed, as well as a small portion of the Youghiogheny River watershed. The influence area is discussed in detail in Chapter 4.

Table 2.3: Housing Unit Projections by Watershed and Subarea

Geography	Housing Units				
	2005 Existing ¹	2030 Projection	Change, 2005- 2030	Zoned Capacity (Current Regulations) ²	Projected Development as a Share of Capacity
<i>Watersheds</i>					
Youghiogheny River					
Deep Creek Lake Influence Area ³	124	1,311	1,187	1,076	110%
Bear Creek					
Accident	168	193	25	166	15%
Remainder of Bear Creek	822	1,049	227	7,933	3%
Southern Youghiogheny	386	433	47	5,008	1%
Friendsville	281	306	25	61	41%
Remainder of Youghiogheny	2,680	3,343	663	28,723	2%
Little Youghiogheny River					
Oakland	961	1,211	250	537	47%
Loch Lynn Heights	210	235	25	108	23%
Mountain Lake Park	1,017	1,167	150	377	40%
Deer Park	181	256	75	1,088	7%
Remainder of Little Youghiogheny	1,306	1,518	212	8,188	3%
Deep Creek					
Casselman River					
Grantsville	305	405	100	528	19%
Remainder of Casselman	1,955	2,387	432	16,201	3%
Savage River	1,093	1,355	262	10,947	2%
North Branch Potomac River					
Kitzmilller	164	189	25	115	22%
Remainder of North Branch	1,048	1,223	175	19,995	1%
Georges Creek					
	66	74	8	2,246	0%
Summary					
Towns (10% of Total New Units)	3,287	3,962	675	2,980	23%
Deep Creek Lake Area (60% of Total)	5,683	9,733	4,050	24,160	17%
Rest of County (30% of Total)	9,356	11,381	2,025	99,241	2%
County Total	18,326	25,076	6,750	126,381	5%

Notes:

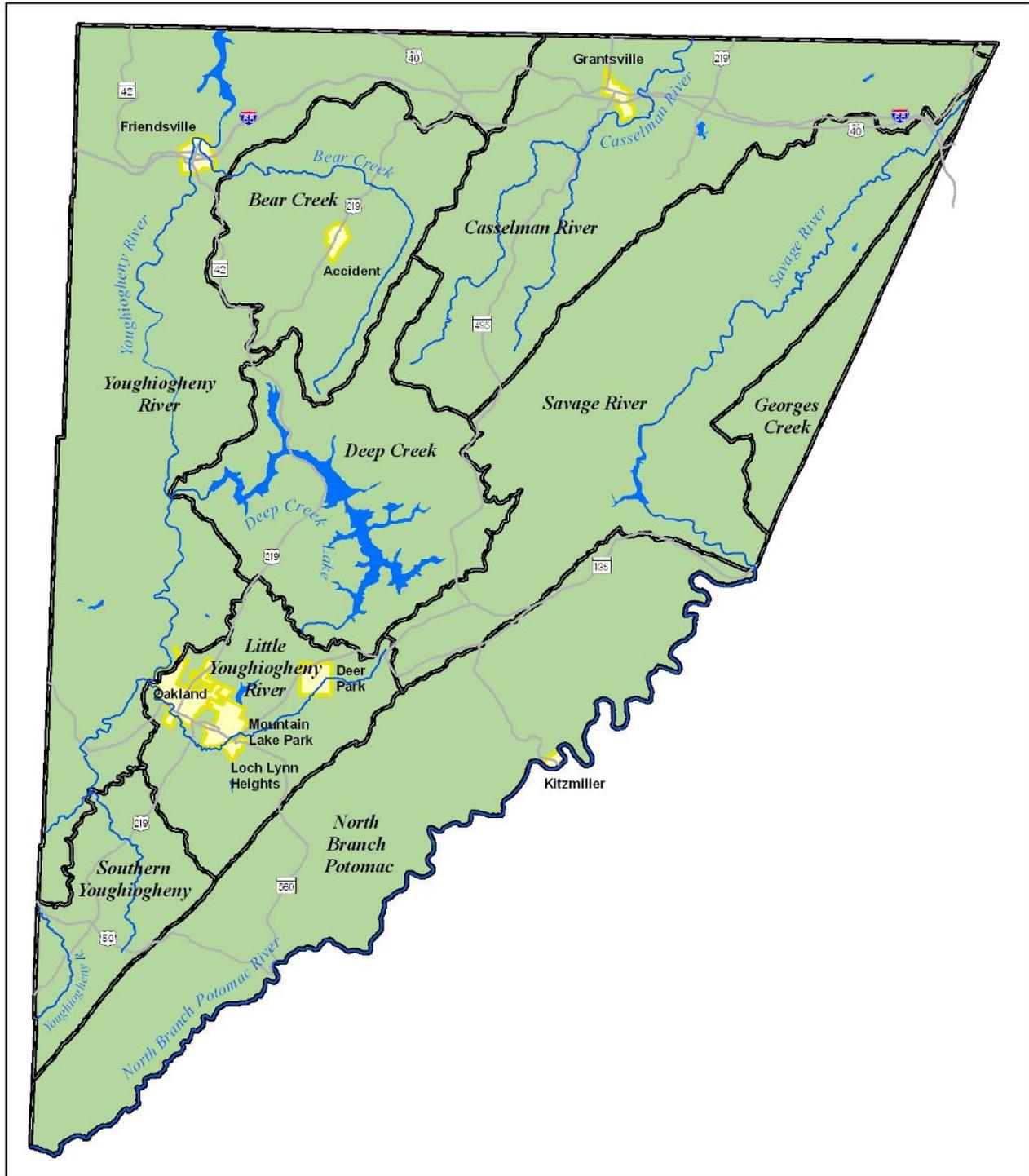
1: Source: MD State Department of Assessment and Taxation (SDAT) Maryland Property View 2005 reflecting existing units as of August 1, 2005. Minor differences may exist between SDAT and census data, due to different data collection methodology.

2: Source: Maryland Department of Planning, Development Capacity Analysis, November 1, 2006. Capacity is the capacity of existing (2005) undeveloped or underdeveloped land.

3: The Deep Creek Lake Influence Area includes the entire Deep Creek Lake watershed, as defined by MDE, plus a small portion of the Youghiogheny River watershed, near the WISP Resort and Sang Run Road. The projected development exceeds the "capacity" because the densities for the Wisp Resort development were set through the

Planned Residential Development (PRD) provisions of the Zoning Ordinance. These PRD densities were higher than the assumed average density used by MDP for the Development Capacity model.

Map 2.2: Comprehensive Plan Watersheds

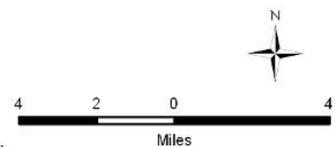


Comprehensive Plan Watersheds

Legend

- Watersheds
- Rivers and Streams
- Municipalities

Note: Bear Creek and the Southern Youghiogheny are geographically part of the Youghiogheny River Watershed, but are treated separately due to distinct cultural and land use patterns.



- Bear Creek is a combination of three 12-digit watersheds within the Youghiogheny River watershed. Bear Creek is broken out separately because of its special agricultural and scenic resources. The Bear Creek watershed (as defined in this Plan) is a state designated Rural Legacy Area, eligible for special preservation funds.
- The Southern Youghiogheny is combination of two 12-digit watersheds within the Youghiogheny River watershed. It is broken out separately because its agricultural and cultural character differentiates it from other portions of the Youghiogheny River watershed.

The two right hand columns in Table 2.3 address “capacity.” Capacity is the total number of housing units that could be built under existing (2005) land development regulations. The column “Projected Development as a Share of Capacity” shows what share of this capacity the projected growth through 2030 would use. For example, the 262 new units in the Savage River watershed (1,355 units in 2030, minus 1,093 existing units) would comprise two percent of the available capacity in the watershed as of 2005 (10,947 units).⁷

2.6 Commercial and Industrial

As of 2005, the Maryland Department of Planning (MDP) estimated that there were an estimated 20,300 part-time and full-time jobs in Garrett County. However, the County typically uses data on full-time jobs from the Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation, which reported 11,765 jobs in Garrett County in 2006. Of these jobs, the County estimates that approximately 1,126 were in the County’s major industrial sites such as Central Garrett Industrial Park, Northern Garrett Industrial Park, and Southern Garrett Business & Technology Park (Table 2-4). Major employers in the County include Wal-Mart, GMS Mine Services/Pioneer Conveyor, First United National Bank & Trust, Garrett County Memorial Hospital, Beitzel Corporation, and the Wisp Resort.

Applying MDP’s projected job growth rates (approximately 14 percent job growth through 2030) to DLLR’s job data shows that the County would gain approximately 1,629 jobs. The Garrett County estimates that non-residential building square footage in 2005 was approximately 3.8 million square feet, and will increase to 7.1 million square feet by 2030.

Table 2.4: Non-Residential Development, Existing and Projected

	Existing ¹	2030	Change
Jobs	11,765	13,394	1,629 (14%)
Business and Industrial	1,486	3,250	1,764 (119%)
Square Footage	3,921,488	6,720,738	2,799,250 (71%)
Business and Industrial	951,488	2,655,738	1,704,250 (179%)
Commercial and Retail	2,970,000	4,065,000	1,095,000 (37%)

1: Existing jobs data are from 2006, while square footage data are from 2008. Both are the most recent data available at the time of publication of this plan.

Source: ERM, DLLR, MDP, and Garrett County Economic Development.

⁷ A memorandum describing the capacity analysis is included in the Appendix to this Comprehensive Plan (MDP Capacity Development Analysis_final 11-1-06).

