

6 Transportation Element

This chapter identifies the components comprising the countywide transportation system. It identifies transportation improvements and policies that are needed to support planned land uses and improve the function and safety of the transportation system. The Plan recommends improvements that will accommodate bicycle and pedestrian circulation as components of the transportation network and as part of the County's overall plan for recreation.

The transportation considerations in the Deep Creek Lake area of the County are different from those in the more rural portions of the County. Chapter 4 of this Plan identifies the specific transportation policies and facility improvements for the Deep Creek Lake area. The local transportation needs within Garrett County's eight towns are addressed by each town's individual Comprehensive Plan and not in this chapter.

The Transportation Element was prepared by reviewing the County's transportation system components, including highways, pedestrian facilities, bicycle routes, bus system and the airport. Existing conditions were identified using the most recent available data. Development of this element included a functional assessment of the highway network, a review of transportation trends, and identification of additional issues for consideration for each transportation system component. Recommendations to address these issues and support the County's transportation goals and objectives are listed at the end of this chapter. Specific recommendations for the Deep Creek Lake area are in Chapter 4.

6.1 Goals and Objectives

The transportation goal for the County is to:

Plan and build a balanced, efficient transportation system to meet the mobility needs of residents and businesses and to support the County's growth as a vacation destination.

Objectives to support the goal are listed below.

1. Assure consistency between the county land use plan, zoning and subdivision ordinances, and other regulations, and the requirements the transportation system.
2. Preserve roadway capacity and improve safety.
3. Improve coordination between county and state agencies in the review and approval of road projects and development projects that impact roads.
4. Establish on-going funding and improvement mechanisms for roadway system preservation to address system deficiencies and for transportation system capital improvements.
5. Support planned growth of the Garrett County Airport as a component of the County's multi-modal transportation system and a focus for related economic development.
6. Protect scenic qualities of the rural roads.
7. Promote mobility for all by encouraging transit use.
8. Provide accommodation for bicycling and walking as a means of local travel and for recreational purposes.

6.2 Roads

6.2.1 Existing Conditions

Roads within Garrett County are owned and maintained primarily by the Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA), the County, and the eight municipalities. Private entities including developers and property owners' associations have responsibility for maintaining some local roads.

State

The Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) owns and maintains 197 miles of roadway in Garrett County. For funding purposes, SHA categorizes roadways into a primary highway system and a secondary system. The basis for categorizing roadways according to the function that they serve is referred to as a "functional classification system" (see box below). The classification system is used for federal, state and local highway programs and can be used for a variety of other planning purposes, such as prioritizing maintenance and snow removal.

SHA uses only three functional roadway categories for Garrett County, reflecting its rural nature: Rural Interstate, Rural Principal Arterial and Rural Minor Arterial. Map 6.1 shows the roads within Garrett County that hold a Federal Functional Classification. I-68 is classified as a Rural Interstate. North of Oakland, US 219 is classified as a Rural Principal Arterial, and south of Oakland, US 219 is designated as a Rural Minor Arterial. This is due to the amount of development north of Oakland along the highway. The National Pike (US 40) is classified as a Rural Principal Arterial. MD 42, MD 135, MD 39 and US 50 are all classified as Rural Minor Arterials. These facilities are considered the primary regional routes in Garrett County and have the highest priorities for funding and planning.

SHA identifies highway improvement needs in the five-year Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP), which is part of the Maryland Transportation Plan. SHA also maintains a Highway Needs Inventory (HNI) which is a long-range list of deficiencies on state-maintained highways in each county. The HNI is updated by SHA every two years and it serves as the technical basis for projects to be added into the state transportation capital budget or the CTP.

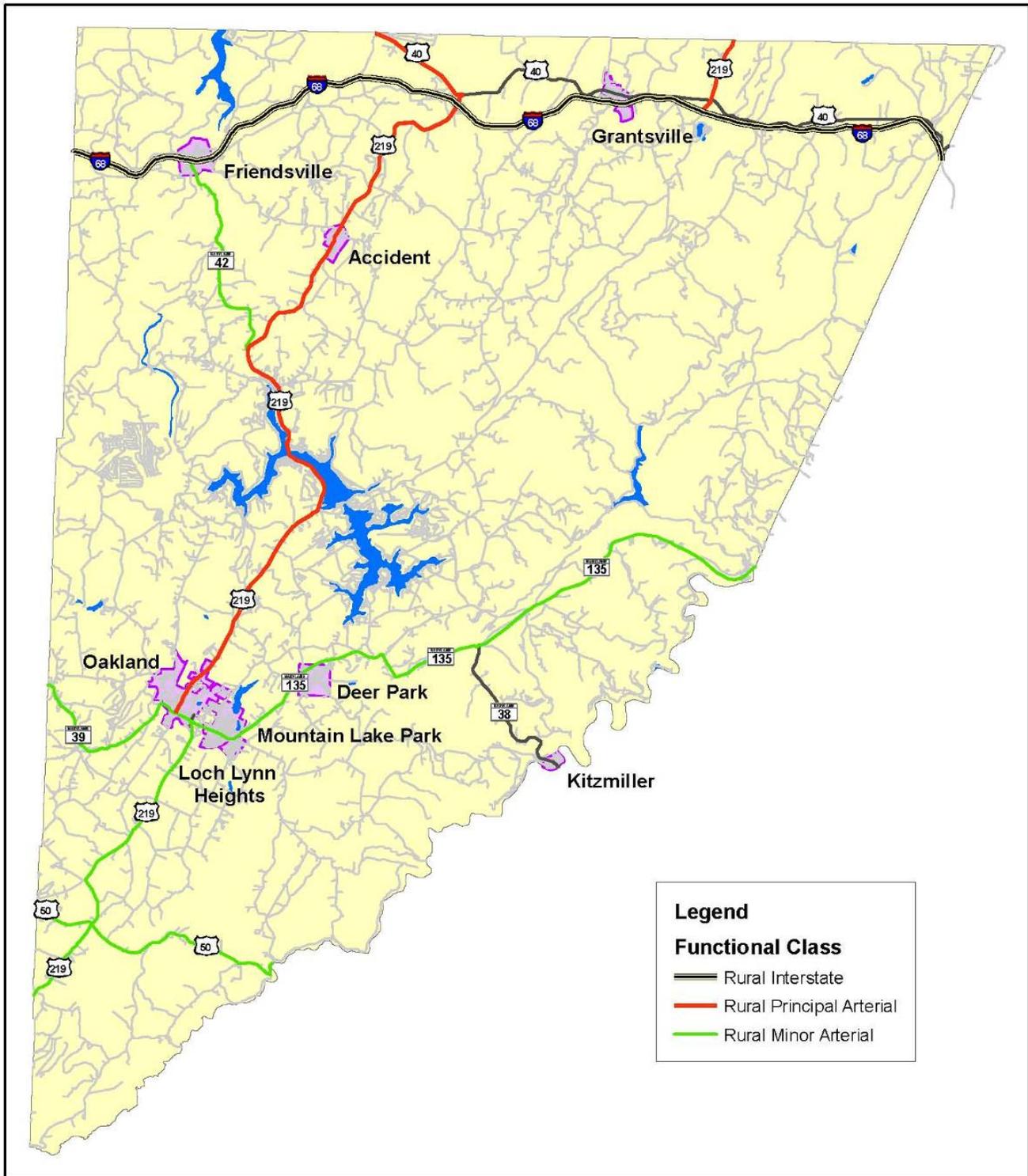
Garrett County is within SHA's District 6, headquartered in LaVale (near Cumberland), one of seven districts in the state. SHA staff consult with the County each year to discuss the County's transportation priorities and the projects to be proposed for funding in the CTP. Since the overall state needs for transportation exceed the state funding available there are often needs identified (from the HNI or newly arising needs) that cannot be funded in the CTP.

Functional Classification

In the 1960s, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) developed a system to classify the nation's roadways according to function. This "Functional Classification System" is the nationwide standard for categorizing roadways, and is used to plan, budget, program, and fiscally manage highway infrastructure improvements.

Functional classification groups roadways into a hierarchy based upon the type of service they are intended to provide to a community. Roads work together as a system to provide for travel in a region, striving to simultaneously provide access to property and travel mobility. Local roads primarily provide land access, arterials primarily provide mobility for through traffic, and collectors bridge the gap between the functions of land access and mobility. As a rural county, Garrett has no roads classified as "collectors".

Map 6.1 Functional Classification of Roads



**Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
Functional Classification of Roads**

-  Bodies of Water
-  Other Roads
-  Municipalities



County

The Garrett County Roads Department designs, manages, and constructs the County roads and bridges. The Department maintains 680 miles of roadway and 127 bridges and operates three maintenance facilities. Most County roads are two lanes wide and only some have shoulders. Each year the County allocates funding to pave some of its remaining dirt roads. As of 2007, only 15 miles of unpaved roads were left in the county.

Towns

The eight incorporated Towns within the County are responsible for operation and maintenance of their local roads. There are 64 miles of roadway maintained by the municipalities in Garrett County.

6.2.2 *County Traffic Trends*

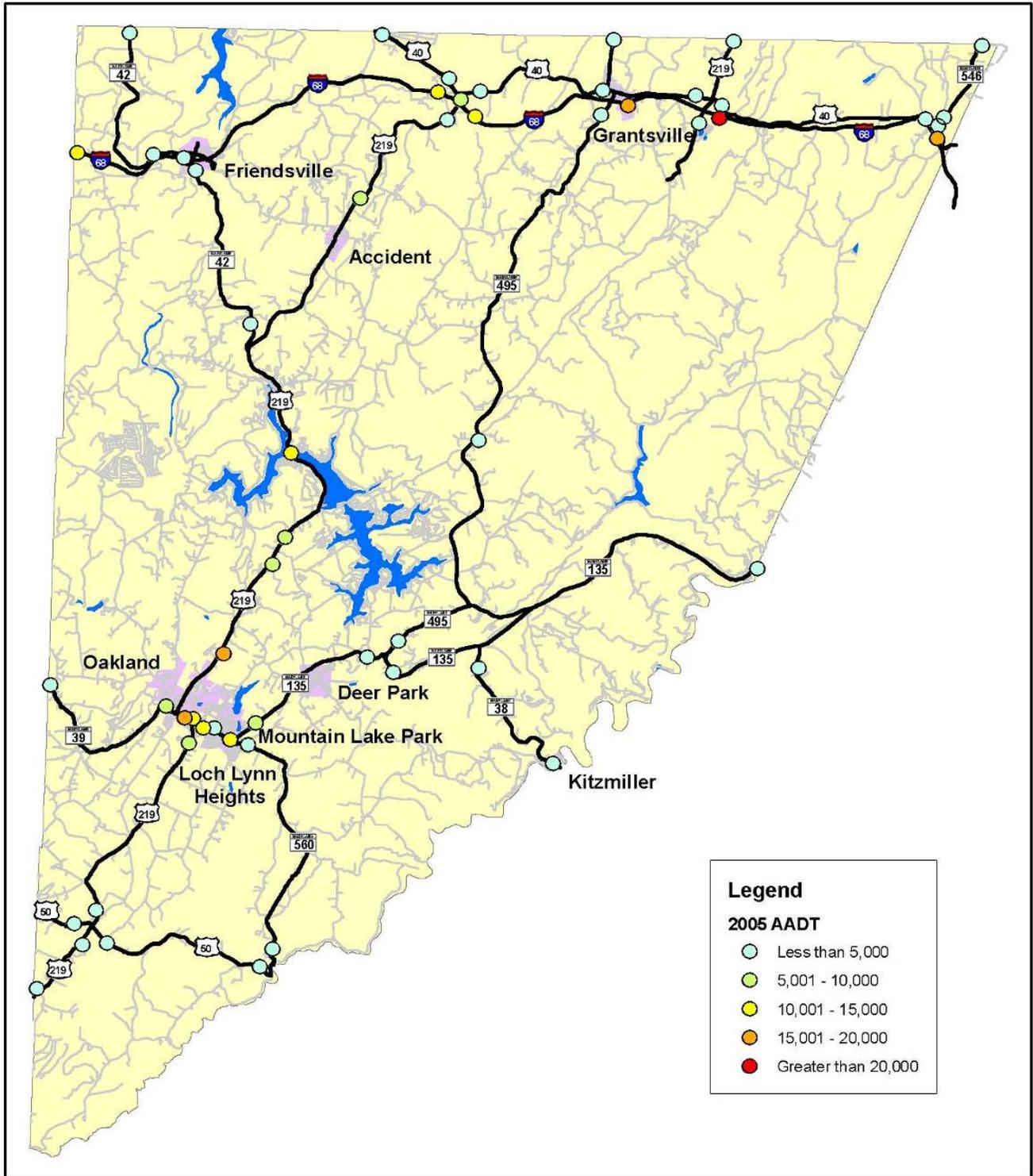
SHA monitors traffic at a number of locations throughout Garrett County. Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) counts for these locations are shown in Map 6.2. The data show that the largest traffic volumes in the County typically occur on I-68 and US 219. Oakland's role as the County seat also results in higher traffic volumes. The highest AADT in the County is just over 20,000 vehicles per day (vpd), along I-68 near US 219. This volume is indicative of the rural nature of the County (for example, AADT on I-68 in Cumberland is more than 44,000). Map 6.3 shows the average annual percentage change in AADT since 1995, when the last Comprehensive Plan was prepared. There are several trends worth noting:

- Traffic growth on County roads ranged from one to six percent annually, compared to approximately two percent statewide and throughout SHA District 6.
- In some locations, such as along MD 135 and MD 39, traffic volumes have declined.
- Traffic in the southern portion of the County grew three to five percent annually, particularly around Oakland, which has seen an increase in volume of about 7,000 vpd since 1995.
- Traffic along I-68 and US 219 grew by two to five percent annually. Traffic volumes on I-68 have increased by about 5,000 vpd since 1995.
- Traffic along US 219 in the Deep Creek Lake area grew by about two percent per year, adding approximately 2,000 vpd since 1995.

Map 6.3 also shows steady growth in traffic volumes along the Maryland-Pennsylvania border, likely due to policies supporting economic development in the Appalachian Region along that corridor. As planned improvements along US 219 to Meyersdale, PA are completed, the growth in traffic volumes is expected to continue (see the discussion of Corridor H in Section 6.3.3).

The primary routes serving the County are I-68, US 219 and MD 135. I-68 is the primary east-west corridor serving through travel and the northern portion of the County. MD 135 is the primary east-west corridor serving the southern part of the County. US 219 is the primary north-south corridor, which also directly serves the Deep Creek Lake area. Several Priority Funding Areas and the County's Enterprise Zones are also located along these corridors. The Towns of Oakland, Accident, Friendsville, Grantsville, Deer Park, and Loch Lynn Heights are all accessed via these primary corridors, making them primary areas for growth in the County.

Map 6.2 2005 Average Annual Daily Traffic Volumes

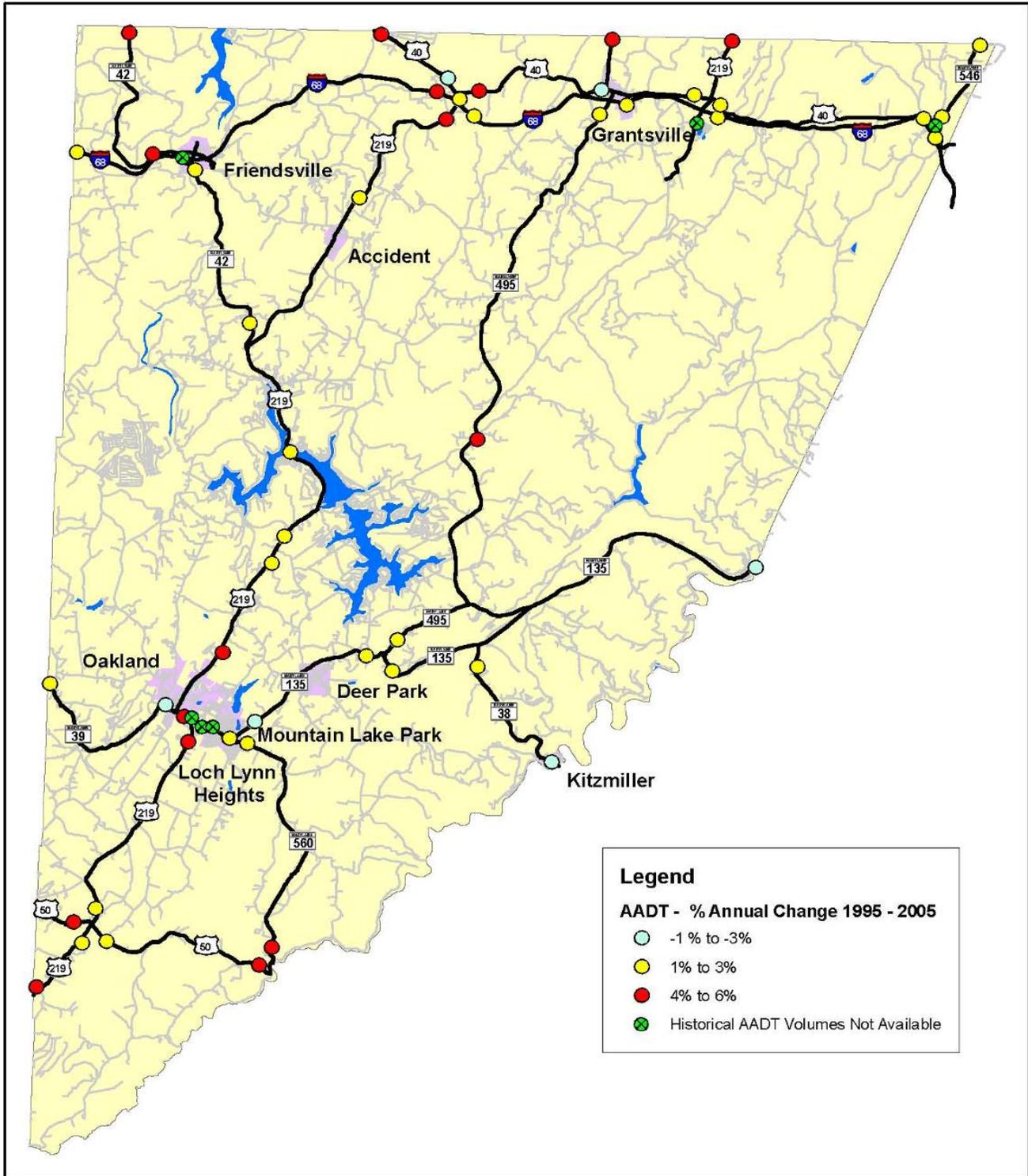


2005 Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) Volumes

- Major Roads
- Other Roads
- Bodies of Water
- Municipalities

Miles

Map 6.3 Average Annual Daily Traffic Volumes % Annual Change 1995-2005



**Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) Volumes
% Annual Change 1995 - 2005**

- Major Roads
- Other Roads
- Bodies of Water
- Municipalities



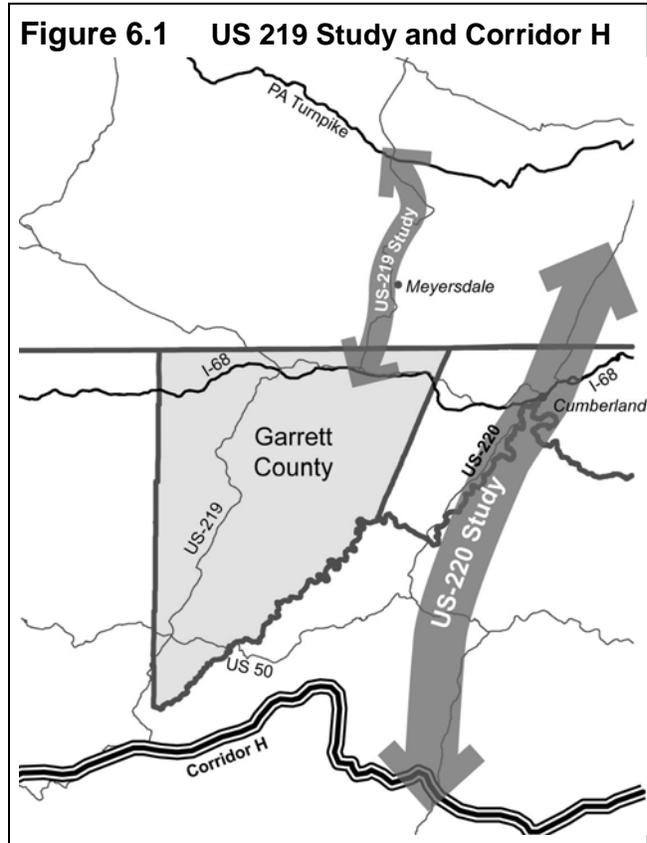
6.2.3 *Planned Road Improvements*

State Roads

The following projects have funding and are included in the MDOT CTP under the Primary and Secondary Construction Program for 2007:

- US 219 North Study.** A joint planning study between the states of Maryland and Pennsylvania, investigating options to improve US 219 to provide better access from I-68 in Maryland to the Pennsylvania Turnpike via Meyersdale, Pennsylvania (see Figure 6.1). Most of the corridor is in Pennsylvania; the Maryland portion of the project from I-68 north to the state line is 2.54 miles long.

This project is part of a broader effort to improve the highway links between Pennsylvania and points north and Appalachian Development Highway System Corridor H; upgrade north-south access for residents, businesses, and visitors; and provide opportunities for improving economic development in this region of Appalachia.¹ The main link between I-68 and Corridor H would follow the US-220 corridor south of Cumberland. The County supports the effort to improve the US 220 corridor and the US 219 north corridor (north of I-68 only) as the primary link between Pennsylvania and Corridor H.



The County does not support the US 219 right of way south of I-68 as the primary link between Pennsylvania and Corridor H as this right-of-way is physically constrained in many locations, particularly around Deep Creek Lake. The segment of US 219 near the Lake is also the heart of the County’s tourism-related economy. The segments of US 219 in the Bear Creek (north of McHenry) and Southern Youghiogheny (south of Oakland) watersheds also traverse areas rich in scenic, agricultural, and sensitive natural resources. A major roadway and its associated traffic, as would necessarily occur on the primary link to Corridor H, are incompatible with these economic, environmental, and scenic resources.

- US 219 Oakland Bypass (US 219 Relocated).** A 2.4 mile roadway that will relocate US 219 to the east from north of Oakland to MD 135. This project was identified in the 1995 Garrett County Comprehensive Plan and is supported by Garrett County. The intent of the project is to divert through traffic and truck traffic from downtown Oakland. Construction is expected to begin in 2010 and the acquisition of needed right-of-way has

¹ Corridor H is a new road that will run roughly parallel to I-68, linking Elkins to Wardensville, near the Virginia/West Virginia line. More information can be found at <http://www.wvcorridorh.com/>.

begun. Sidewalks and shoulders will be included. Federal and state funds are approved for this project.

County Roads

Garrett County's 2008 Capital Budget includes funds for realignment and improved geometric design at the intersection of MD 495 and Spring Lick Road. The County has also indicated that the following intersections are candidates for similar improvements:

- MD 495 at New Germany Road
- US 219 at Kings Run Road
- US 219 at Pysell Road
- US 219 at Mayhew Inn Road

The capital budget also includes line items for improvements to bridges. Funding needs for bridge maintenance and repair are significant and can comprise the majority of the County Roads Division projects in a budget year.

Highway Needs Inventory

Table 6.1 lists the projects included in the Highway Needs Inventory (HNI) for Garrett County.

Table 6.1: Highway Needs Inventory Projects in Garrett County

Location	Type of Improvement, Comments
US 219 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All of US 219 north of Oakland • Oakland Bypass • Accident Bypass • West Virginia line to US 50 • Ben Dewitt Road to Mason School Road • I-68 to Pennsylvania Line (see Section 6.3.3) 	Reconstruction for all segments, except the Oakland Bypass and the Accident Bypass (a two-mile bypass of US 219 around Accident). US 219 north of I-68 would be reconstructed as a freeway.
MD 42 from US 219 to MD 742	Reconstruction
MD 135 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From US 219 to MD 560 • From MD 495 to scenic overlook near MD 38 	Reconstruction
MD 495 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From MD 135 to North Glade Road • From Maple Grove Road to South of I-68 	Reconstruction. These routes provide alternate access to the Deep Creek Lake area.
MD 560, from US 50 to White Church Steyer Road	Reconstruction

6.2.4 Future Traffic

In order to evaluate the anticipated traffic impact of the projected 2030 growth on the Garrett County transportation system, a sketch method of traffic analysis was applied. Using information on the existing transportation network, this method assumed that projects currently included in the county and state capital programs would be complete. Significant state projects included were the Oakland Bypass and the US 219 project north of I-68. County-funded capital projects included were the access roads for the Adventure Sports Center and the Keyzers Ridge business park.

Based on the assumptions about the future network conditions and projected growth by 2030 (as described in Table 2.2), estimates were made on the number and distribution of new vehicle trips. These estimates led to projected average daily traffic (ADT) and Peak Season ADT (PSADT) volumes on key roadways.² This traffic analysis method was used to identify existing and future system deficiencies and roadway network capacity.

Once future year Peak Season ADT was determined, critical intersections in the Deep Creek Lake area were evaluated according to Highway Capacity Manual standards (see Chapter 4 for more detail and discussion), which assign Level of Service to roadways and intersections (see box on next page).

The Transportation Technical Report (included in the Plan Appendix) gives more detail on traffic analysis methodology. Map 6.4 shows the anticipated 2030 PSADT on state roads throughout the county, based on the 2030 growth projected in Table 2.2. The overall conclusion of the traffic analysis is that the growth in traffic volumes in the County through 2030 is generally expected to be slower than was seen between 1995 and 2005 (see Table 6.2), although increased traffic will still have impacts on the transportation system, particularly in the Deep Creek Lake area, as described in Chapter 4.

Level of Service

Level of Service (LOS) analyses assign a letter grade, ranging from A to F, to roadway segments and intersections. Level of Service is determined by evaluating a number of factors including capacity, speed, delay and even the percent time spent following other traffic.

LOS A represents the very best conditions, where the driver experiences very little delay or discomfort. LOS F represents the worst conditions where congestion and delay are unacceptable and a roadway segment or intersection is simply unable to process the traffic demand.

LOS B, C, D and E represent the ranges between the best and worst conditions. LOS D or above is typically considered acceptable, while LOS E and F are typically considered unacceptable.

Table 6.2: Traffic Growth Trends

Location	Historic Trend Analysis ¹	Future Trend Based on Comprehensive Plan ²
MD 39 West of US 219	1.6%	0.7%
US 219 South of MD 135	1.7%	0.9%
MD 135 West of MD 560	1.0%	1.0%
MD 560 South of MD 135	0.4%	0.7%
MD 135 Northeast of MD 560	0.7%	0.9%
US 219 North of Oakland	2.2%	1.0%
US 219 South of Sand Flat Road	1.9%	1.0%
US 219 North of Sand Flat Road	1.7%	1.1%
MD 495 North of Glendale Road	2.1%	1.4%
ATR 35 US 219 at Deep Creek Bridge	2.1%	1.3%
MD 42 West of US 219	2.3%	1.1%
I-68 at West VA State Line	1.8%	2.0%
US 219 South of Bear Creek Road	1.8%	0.8%
I-68 East of US 219 S	1.4%	1.7%
I-68 East of MD 495	1.8%	1.7%

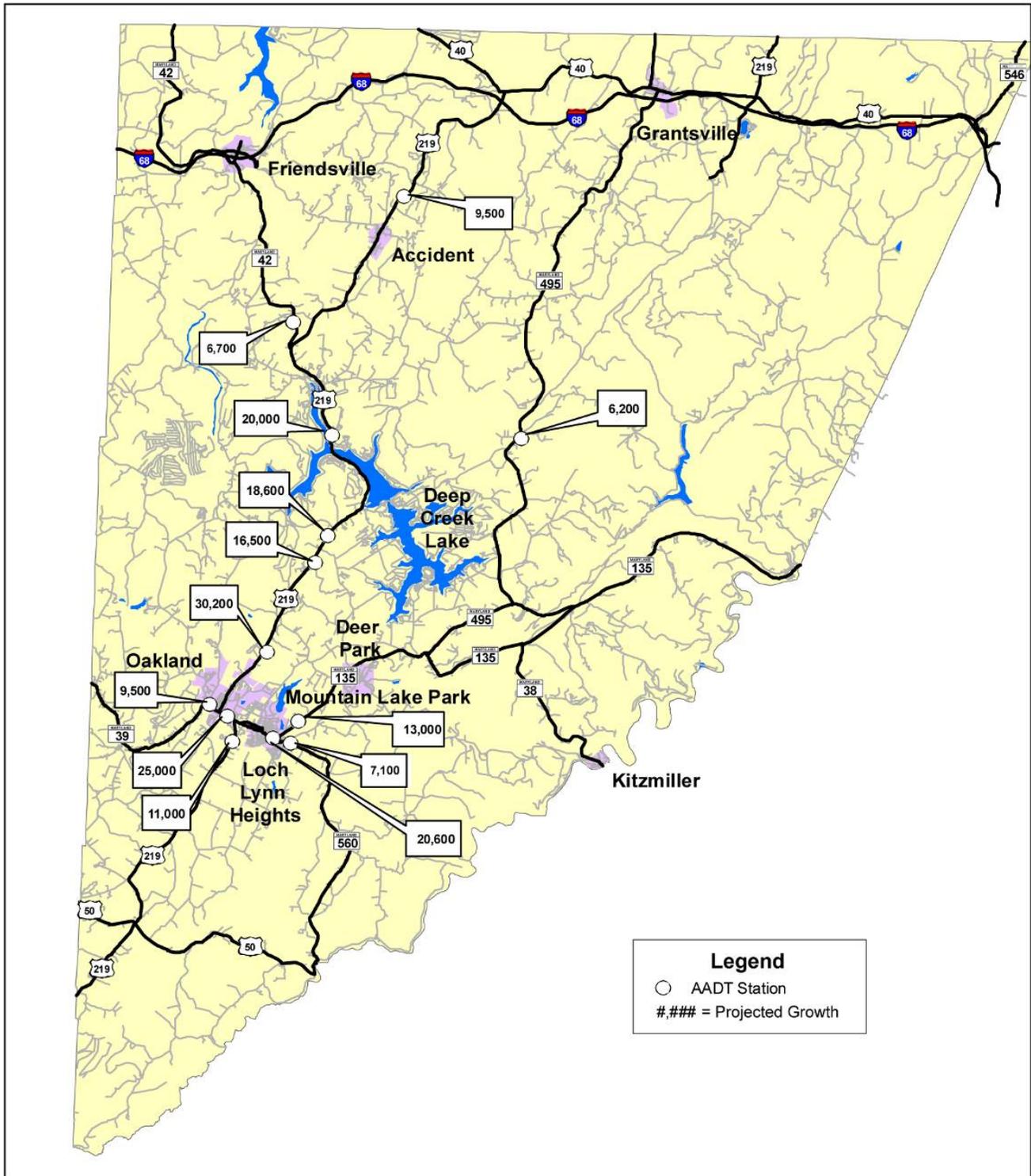
¹ Indicates the average annual growth in traffic volume from 1995 to 2005.

² Indicates the projected average annual growth in peak season traffic volume from 2007 to 2030.

Source: ERM and Whitman, Requardt & Associates, based on SHA data and Comprehensive Plan projections.

² PSADT is the average daily traffic that occurs during the winter and summer peak seasons, and is approximately 33 percent higher than year-round average daily traffic.

Map 6.4 2030 Peak Season Daily Traffic Volumes



2030 Peak Season Daily Traffic (AADT) Volumes

- Major Roads
- Bodies of Water
- Other Roads
- Municipalities



The leveling-off of traffic growth reflects this Plan's growth projections, which assume a slower pace of growth than occurred during the 1995-2005 period. In addition, much of the County's projected residential growth (the primary generator of traffic in the County) will be in the form of seasonal units in the Deep Creek Lake Influence Area. Seasonal units generate lower traffic volumes than permanent residences.³

I-68, MD 135 and MD 560 are exceptions to this general trend, due to the expected increases in development in or near these corridors. With the exception of the US 219 corridor through the Deep Creek Lake area (see Chapter 4), it is anticipated that the current and planned highway infrastructure will be able to accommodate the growth anticipated by the Comprehensive Plan. The key roadway considerations for the County over the horizon of this plan will be to ensure the continued adequacy of the roadway system by preserving roadway capacity, and addressing safety issues that arise.

6.2.5 *Identification of Issues—Road Network*

In general, the existing roadway system outside of the Deep Creek Lake area will adequately serve future anticipated traffic needs, based on the plan projections. The Comprehensive Plan recommends no new roads beyond those identified in current plans (see Section 6.2.3), and a new road in the vicinity of Sky View Drive (see section 4.6.2). Broader considerations about mobility are noted in later sections of this chapter. Since most of the County's growth will occur in the Deep Creek Lake area, most impacts to the County's roadway network are in the Lake area. These impacts, and the Comprehensive Plan's recommended solutions (including recommendations for funding transportation system improvements), are discussed in Chapter 4.

MD 495

As development reaches projected levels, the County should consider an alternative access route to serve the Lake area and the municipalities in the Little Youghiogheny River watershed. Thayerville, the two lane Deep Creek Bridge, and the segment of US 219 between those two points, act as traffic bottlenecks. Topography and concerns about community character also limit the County's ability to widen US 219 in areas where it might be warranted after traffic volumes pass projected levels.

With an existing interchange at I-68, MD 495 would be a logical eastern gateway to the Lake area and (with its connection to MD 135) the municipalities of Oakland, Mountain Lake Park, Loch Lynn Heights, and Deer Park. Reconfiguration of MD 495 as a major collector⁴ with wider shoulders could also promote economic development and increase the safety and redundancy of the transportation network—providing increased road capacity and alternative egress in case US 219 were to become disabled by weather, traffic accident, or other emergency.

Such a concept would require improving MD 495's geometry, as well as paving and signage improvements (more extensive than those listed in the HNI). MD 495 is a designated Scenic Byway (see Section 6.7.2), and future improvements to increase capacity would have to respect this status.⁵ The direct and secondary land use impacts of upgrading MD 495 would also need to be carefully assessed, particularly in rural portions of the County where there is no zoning.

³ The ITE Trip Generation Manual, which is the nationwide standard for trip generation calculations, assigns 3.1 weekday trips per "recreational home" (i.e., "seasonal residential unit") and 9.5 weekday trips per permanent residential unit.

⁴ Major collectors are designed to link arterial roadway. They typically have one travel lane and a paved shoulder in each direction.

⁵ Proven methods, often referred to as Context Sensitive Design, exist for adding capacity to Scenic Byways, while maintaining or even enhancing the scenic qualities of the highway.

White Face Farm

The development of the White Face Farm (near the Garrett County Airport, just outside the Deep Creek Lake Influence Area) into a business park and mixed housing site will have impacts on Bumble Bee Road and the Mosser Road/US 219 intersection, since this road and intersection are the main access to the development area. Once the business park tenants (or target industry types) and the amount of housing have been identified, the traffic to be generated, and the adequacy of Bumble Bee Road, Mosser Road, and the US 219 intersection can be assessed. The County may need to improve other access roads (such as Bumble Bee Road north toward Accident) to provide an additional access point for the White Face Farm site, thus reducing the impact on US 219.

Assessing Traffic Impacts

Outside of the Lake area, the County's road system is primarily rural in character, and much of the land it serves is targeted for resource conservation. However, there are some locations—such as White Face Farm—where development will nonetheless occur. The Subdivision Ordinance allows the County to require road improvements along property frontages (such as acceleration/deceleration lanes). SHA can require a traffic impact study for any new development on a state road. However, the County does not have the clear authority to require such studies for proposed developments on County roads, even in cases where a project developed on a County road brings traffic onto a state road. In these situations, there is no mechanism to allow SHA to comment on the proposed project, even though traffic will impact the SHA-maintained road.

Please see Section 4.6.2 (in the Deep Creek Lake Influence Area Master Plan chapter) for additional discussion on the provisions of potential Traffic Impact Study requirements.

Access Management

The County also needs to consider is the importance of maintaining the capacity of the existing road system, specifically by limiting the number of new entry points onto public roads. Individual access for each developed lot can interrupt traffic flow and eventually reduce roadway capacity.

Currently, the Planning Commission has the ability to require frontage roads (or service roads) and shared driveways on arterial highways (such as US 219 in the Deep Creek Lake area—see Chapter 4), but cannot do so on other roads. Amending the Subdivision Ordinance to allow the County to require such access management (be it for new development, redevelopment of existing lots, or to consolidate entrances to existing properties in high traffic areas) can help to preserve road system capacity.

6.3 Bicycle Facilities

Existing Conditions

SHA's 2007 Maryland Bicycle Map identifies US 219 (from US 40 to the West Virginia line and US 40A and US 40 from Allegany County to the Pennsylvania Line) as part of its statewide network of on-road bicycle routes. Over time, SHA expects to post bicycle route signs on the entire statewide network. "Share the Road" signs and shoulder improvements have been made on US 219, and it has been designated as a bike route by SHA.

As part of the 2002 Statewide 20 Year Bicycle and Pedestrian Access Master Plan, the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) compiled a Bicycle and Pedestrian Needs Inventory. Similar to the HNI, the Bicycle/Pedestrian Needs Inventory identified those state roads with the greatest need for bicycle and pedestrian improvements. Most of Garrett County's bicycle improvement needs identified in the 2002 Plan are located in rural areas

outside of the PFAs, which made them a secondary priority for state funding. Those improvement needs are summarized Table 6.3.

Table 6.3: Bicycle Improvement Needs¹

Route Name/Number	From	To	Length in Miles
US 40 Alt	US 40	Finzel Rd	18.0
US 40	State Line	US 40 Alt National Pike	3.7
MD 42	Garrett Highway	First Ave	7.2
US 219	Memorial Dr	Accident	16.8
US 219	Accident	Stockyard Rd	5.20
MD 669	State Line	US 40 Alt	1.67
Other small segments			2.4

*1: Excludes segments that are wholly or primarily within municipalities.
Source: Maryland DOT, <http://www.mdot.state.md.us/Planning/Bicycle/TECHNI.PDF>*

Garrett County's 2003 Recreational Trails Plan update included some recommendations for on-road biking improvements in addition to recommendations for hiking trails, recognizing the importance of bicycling as a recreational activity in the County. The intent of the trails plan is to link the existing and proposed trails in various parks throughout the County, using on-road bicycle trails when off-road connections are not possible.

The 2003 Recreational Trails Plan calls for bicycle facility improvements on the following County Roads:

- Herrington Manor Road from Tomar Drive to Swallow Falls
- New Germany Road from Route 495 to Grantsville
- Along Broadford Road.

The Recreational Trails Plan is described in the 2005 LPPRP, which is incorporated into this Comprehensive Plan, and included in the Plan Appendix.

A link to the Allegheny Highlands Trail near Finzel would provide an important connection between Garrett County's existing and planned trail system, and this highly popular regional trail.



US 219, a designated bicycle route, has widened shoulders and “Share the Road” signage

Outside of the Deep Creek Lake Influence Area, the Comprehensive Plan recommends no new bicycle routes beyond those already identified in other plans, or as discussed above. Chapter 4 discusses bicycle mobility needs and recommendations in the Influence Area.

6.4 Pedestrian Facilities

Existing Conditions

Pedestrian facilities can include multi-use paths, sidewalks, crosswalks, pedestrian crossing signals, or signage and pedestrian-level street lighting. Since most of Garrett County is rural, pedestrian facilities are limited, particularly outside of the Deep Creek Lake area. Along the

197 miles of State-maintained highways in Garrett County, there are currently 4.5 miles of sidewalk, most of which are in municipalities, where development is more concentrated.

The County's 2008 Capital Projects Fund lists only one sidewalk project: the provision of a sidewalk between Southern High School and Mountain Lake Park.

Chapter 4 discusses pedestrian needs and recommendations for the Deep Creek Lake Influence Area.

Discussion of Issues

It is desirable to promote walking as a means of transportation for overall personal health and environmental reasons. Additionally, federal transportation policies support pedestrian travel as a viable option to driving where the land uses make it feasible.

Sidewalks are not generally warranted along rural roads, where there are relatively low traffic volumes, little walking, and few destinations for pedestrian trips. In these cases, pedestrian travel along shoulders is generally acceptable. However, as areas begin to develop and change from rural to suburban in nature, and as the level of vehicular and pedestrian traffic increases, and the need for pedestrian facilities should be considered.

As new County facilities with high levels of activity are planned, and existing facilities (schools, college, libraries, parks, etc.) are improved, an assessment of pedestrian access should be completed to ensure safe pedestrian access within and to these sites. Consideration should be given to pedestrian access along and across roads in developed and developing areas (including villages), particularly the need for marked crosswalks or pedestrian crossing signs to assure safety.

6.5 Transit

Existing Conditions

Garrett Transit Service (GTS) is the public transportation provider for Garrett County. This is a demand response transit system operated by the Garrett County Community Action Committee, Inc (CAC). The service operates 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, as requested. In fiscal year 2006, GTS had a fleet of 34 vehicles and carried 149,312 total passengers. This was an eight percent increase in ridership over 2005. GTS carries County residents to medical facilities, employment, shopping, senior centers, adult day programs, appointments, early child development centers, and after school programs. GTS also delivers meals to the homebound elderly. A new Garrett Transit vehicle storage/maintenance facility is to be located within the new Garrett County Public Works Complex on Francis Sanders Drive near Mountain Lake Park.

GTS plays a role in supporting economic development. During busy ski season weekends, the Wisp Resort contracts with GTS to provide shuttle service for customers and employees between the parking lots at Garrett Community College and the resort. GTS also has plans to provide shuttle services for activities at the Adventure Sports Center. The Wisp Resort also has one or more vehicles used for shuttle services as a precursor to an expanded on-site Resort shuttle service.

In the future, GTS is considering shuttle service from the Oakland area to the Northern Garrett Industrial Park and the Keyzers Ridge Business Park.

The Wisp Resort owns and operates shuttle vehicles for travel within the Resort, and expects to expand this on-site shuttle service in the future.

Discussion of Issues

Special events and seasonal activities that occur in the County create periodic congestion. Most of these activities occur in the Lake area, and the role of shuttles to address the congestion is discussed in Chapter 4.

The County should continue to evaluate the broader role of GTS in providing mobility options for other areas of the County, particularly in light of future employment opportunities and the needs of older residents. As the activity in the Lake area and County business parks expands, employment opportunities will also grow. New GTS service to industrial parks would be a way to increase access to those employment opportunities, particularly for residents without cars. There may be more opportunities for the business community to coordinate with GTS on transit services, to help bring employees to businesses with jobs to fill.

As the County population ages, there will also be an increase in the number of residents who no longer drive. After retirement, many people prefer to live in their homes as long as possible (a phenomenon referred to as “aging in place”). For this to be possible, transit options must be available to help elderly residents conduct their daily business.

6.6 Other Transportation

6.6.1 Recreational Trails

The County’s 2005 Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan (LPPRP) identifies approximately 100 miles of trails in the County’s state lands, managed by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The 2003 County Recreational Trails Plan also identifies a number of implementation priorities for trails (listed in the Comprehensive Plan Appendix). The Trails Plan also emphasizes the need for enhanced marketing and education about trail use and securing financial support for trails. Assuring ADA accessibility on paths is also identified as a priority.

Private property owners or trail advocacy organizations are also involved in making connections to state lands and between activity centers. The County and the Appalachian Regional Commission have proposed a Meadow Mountain Trail to be created on property owned by the 4H Education Center.

Discussion of issues

There are currently a number of entities involved in the identification, funding and implementation of recreational trails in the County. The County is considering the establishment of a Department of Recreation and Parks, which would centralize responsibility for trail planning. Such a department could better coordinate the various interests, identify overall needs, and establish County priorities for trail facilities. Such an entity could also focus on the availability of special grant funding or programs to assist the County with trail project implementation.

6.6.2 Scenic Roads

Existing Conditions

The Maryland Scenic Byways Program, established by SHA, has designated the following scenic byways in Garrett County.

- I-68: Entire length in Garrett County
- MD 495 (Bittering Road): Entire length from I-68 to MD 135

- MD 135 (Maryland Highway): Entire length from Bloomington to Oakland
- MD 38 (Kitzmilller Road): Entire length from MD 135 to Kitzmilller
- Rock Lodge Road: From MD 495 to State Park Road, then through Deep Creek Lake State Park to Glendale Road.
- Oakland to Bittering, via Herrington Manor Road, Swallow Falls Road, Mayhew Inn Road, US 219, Glendale Road, and Rock Lodge Road.
- Grantsville to Bloomington, via New Germany Road, Big Run Road, and Savage River Road

The mission of the Maryland Scenic Byways Program is to enhance the quality of life and pride in, and the visitor appeal of the local community. The Program promotes responsible management and preservation of the state's most scenic cultural and historic roads and surrounding resources. The Program provides funds for community based corridor management plans, which makes them eligible for additional grant funds.



The view from MD 495, one of the state-designated Scenic Byways in Garrett County

The County has not sought funding to develop corridor management plans for scenic roads. However, protection of views is important to the County's appeal as a vacation destination. It is an objective of this Plan to protect the scenic qualities of the rural landscape. Tunney letter re: high signs on I-68 near Chestnut Ridge.

Discussion of Issues

The loss of scenic views would reduce the beauty of the County's landscape, as viewed from roads, which would detract from its overall character. Tools such as the proposed open space and clustering requirements for development in AR and RR areas, as described in Chapter 3 will help protect scenic qualities. The County's Subdivision Ordinance currently discusses scenic character only in Section 304 (single family cluster option), which is rarely used. The County should consider adding a more general provision to the Ordinance that would require the County to assess the impacts of a subdivision on scenic views (a term that

would have to be defined for purposes of the Ordinance). Any new or upgraded roads in rural areas should have an open section design (i.e., without curbs and gutters), to minimize the road's impact on scenic and rural character, and to maintain stormwater flow.

6.6.3 *Airport*

Existing Conditions

The Garrett County Airport, located on Bumble Bee Road north of McHenry, is a general aviation airport serving private aircraft. The airport has no scheduled commercial air service. Federal funds were recently utilized to extend the runway to 5,000 feet, and to expand hangar space to include an operations facility.

The County owns 340 acres (known as the White Face Farm) south and west of the airport, where a business park and workforce housing project are planned. A 2008 grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission will support the development of this business park.

6.6.4 *Rail*

There are two existing CSX freight rail lines in Garrett County. Both lines pass through Bloomington, and connect in Luke (in Allegany County) where the New Page paper mill is located. One rail line extends from Luke along the North Branch Potomac River, alternately traversing Garrett County and Grant County, WV, before exiting Maryland at Kempton, the County's southwestern most point. The other rail line extends from Luke, along the Savage River into Deer Park, Loch Lynn Heights and Oakland, before leaving the County near Hutton. This freight rail line serves one wood-products business in Oakland.

Discussion of Issues

As the nation's highways become more congested, there is greater interest in cargo movement via freight rail. However, freight rail lines all over the country are facing challenges. Most rail lines need to be upgraded to allow trains to operate at efficient speeds, but there is a shortage of funds available for such improvements. The freight rail lines in Garrett County would likely need similar improvements to support significantly increased use. The County should support the retention of these rail lines for potential future use.

6.7 **Policies and Actions**

1. Amend the Subdivision Regulations to give the Department of Planning and Zoning:
 - Clear authority (in consultation with the Roads Department) to require a traffic impact study prior to final plat approval (see also Policy 5 in Chapter 4).
 - Authority (in consultation with the Roads Department) to require access consolidation—in the form of frontage or service roads, shared driveways, shared parking lots, or other appropriate measures—on all County Roads.
 - Authority to require developers to provide pedestrian facilities as part of new development.
2. Coordinate with SHA to assess the feasibility of upgrading MD 495 to provide an alternative north-south route through the County, as described in Section 6.2.5. As a first step, include this project on the Highway Needs Inventory. Any improvements should be compatible with the Scenic Byway status of MD 495.
3. Conduct a study to determine the amount of revenue necessary to fund the transportation system improvements, including (but not limited to) the road, pedestrian, bicycle, transit,

and other strategies described in this Comprehensive Plan. Obtain authority from the Maryland General Assembly to levy an excise tax, and establish such an excise tax (or an impact fee, if an excise tax is not desirable) to pay for these improvements (see Policy 7 in Chapter 4).

4. Assess the adequacy of Bumble Bee Road/Mosser Road to accommodate traffic generated by the planned business park and housing development at White Face Farm.
5. The County supports completion of the Oakland Bypass, as designed by SHA.⁶
6. The County supports the regional effort to link the Pennsylvania Turnpike with Corridor H in West Virginia, via an improved or relocated US 220. The County also supports plans to upgrade US 219 north of I-68, as a supplemental improvement to the region's highway network. However, the County opposes the use of US 219 south of I-68 as the primary link to Corridor H.
7. The County supports implementation of 2003 Recreational Trails Plan.
8. Use AASHTO design guidelines for all new on-road and off-road trails.⁷
9. Ensure collaboration between the Roads Department, the Planning and Land Development Office (or the Department of Recreation and Parks, if created pursuant to the recommendations in this plan), SHA, and trail advocates including the Chamber of Commerce to address bicycling issues, such as route designations, assessing bicycling safety issues, and identifying needs for future improvements.
10. Identify pedestrian needs in areas where pedestrian activity is high or increasing, such as the County's designated villages, and around schools and other institutional uses.
11. Support increased GTS service, particularly to serve employment areas and the needs of elderly residents. Consider building on existing shuttle bus service in the Deep Creek Lake Influence Area (see Policy 5 in Chapter 4)
12. Amend the Subdivision Ordinance to include the following provisions related to Scenic Byways:
 - Establish design criteria to protect the scenic qualities of Scenic Byways and adjacent land.
 - Require the County to review the impacts of a subdivision on scenic views, and define "scenic views" in the Subdivision Ordinance).
 - Require that new roads outside of Priority Funding Areas be "open section" designs.
13. Update the Airport Master Plan as needed to assure eligibility for funding.
14. Promote private air charter use and economic development associated with the Airport.

⁶ See joint press release of the Board of County Commissioners and the Mayor and Town Council of Oakland, April 17, 2007 (full text in the Plan Appendix).

⁷ American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO). 1999. Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities.