

8 Community Facilities

This chapter describes community facilities and services in Garrett County, including educational facilities, public safety (fire, police, and EMS), health care, solid waste and libraries. Parks and recreation facilities are covered in the Garrett County Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan (LPPRP), which is incorporated by reference into this Comprehensive Plan (see Chapter 2).

8.1 Goals and Objectives

The Community Facilities goal for the County is to

Provide a system of community facilities and services that is consistent with projected growth and development and the land use plan.

1. Maintain and upgrade school facilities to high standards, regardless of projected system-wide declines in enrollment.
2. Expand higher educational opportunities in the County and facilities and services for community use at Garrett College.
3. Provide adequate police, fire, and emergency medical services for residents and visitors.
4. Provide high quality medical and health care facilities and services.
5. Upgrade library facilities to meet space and service needs.

8.2 Primary and Secondary Education

8.2.1 Organization and Planning

Garrett County's public schools are operated by Garrett County Public Schools (GCPS), with oversight by the Garrett County Board of Education, which consists of five elected members, an ex-officio member from the Garrett County Commissioners, and a student member. The Board is responsible for the establishment of public schools, the delineation of geographical attendance areas, the reception and administration of funds, the acquisition of sites and the construction of school buildings, the appointment and compensation of school employees, the prescription of curriculum guides and programs of instruction, and the establishment of local school policy.



Northern Garrett High School

8.2.2 Facilities

There are nine public elementary schools (grades K-5), two public middle schools (grades 6-8), and two public high schools (grades 9-12) in Garrett County (see Table 8.1 and Map 8.1). Other public schools are the Swan Meadow School, south of Oakland (grades 1-8, largely serving the Amish and Mennonite population in the Pleasant Valley area), and the Bloomington School (a K-8 school). Six elementary schools house pre-kindergarten programs, while four elementary schools house Head Start programs. Special education services are found at all schools, but Accident and Dennett Road Elementary Schools have concentrated programs. Career and technical education programs, along with a Leadership Academy (Junior ROTC) are provided at both high schools. The Hickory Environmental Education Center and a Planetarium program both complement the school-based instructional programs in science.

Garrett County's school attendance feeder system determines which school students will attend (see Table 8.1).

Table 8.1 GCPS Feeder System

Residents of Southern Garrett County		
Elementary	Middle	High
1. Broad Ford 2. Crellin 3. Dennett Road 4. Kitzmiller 5. Yough Glades	Southern Middle School	Southern High School
Residents Northern Garrett County		
Elementary	Middle	High
1. Accident 2. Friendsville 3. Grantsville 4. Route 40 (some students attending this school attend Allegany County public schools after the 5 th grade)	Northern Middle School	Northern High School

8.2.3 Enrollment Projections and Facility Needs

Enrollment Projections

Public school enrollment in Garrett County has declined slowly but consistently since 1995. This trend is projected to continue through 2015 (Table 8-2). As of September 2006, 157 students were enrolled in five non-public schools in Garrett County. Some of these students may reside outside Garrett County¹.

Facility Needs

Garrett County is the second largest county in the state, but has one of the smallest populations. The transportation of students—and especially travel time—to schools is therefore a major concern. The County strives to keep ride time to school under one hour.

¹ Maryland Department of Education, Non-Public School Enrollment 9-30-2006.

Map 8.1: Community Facilities

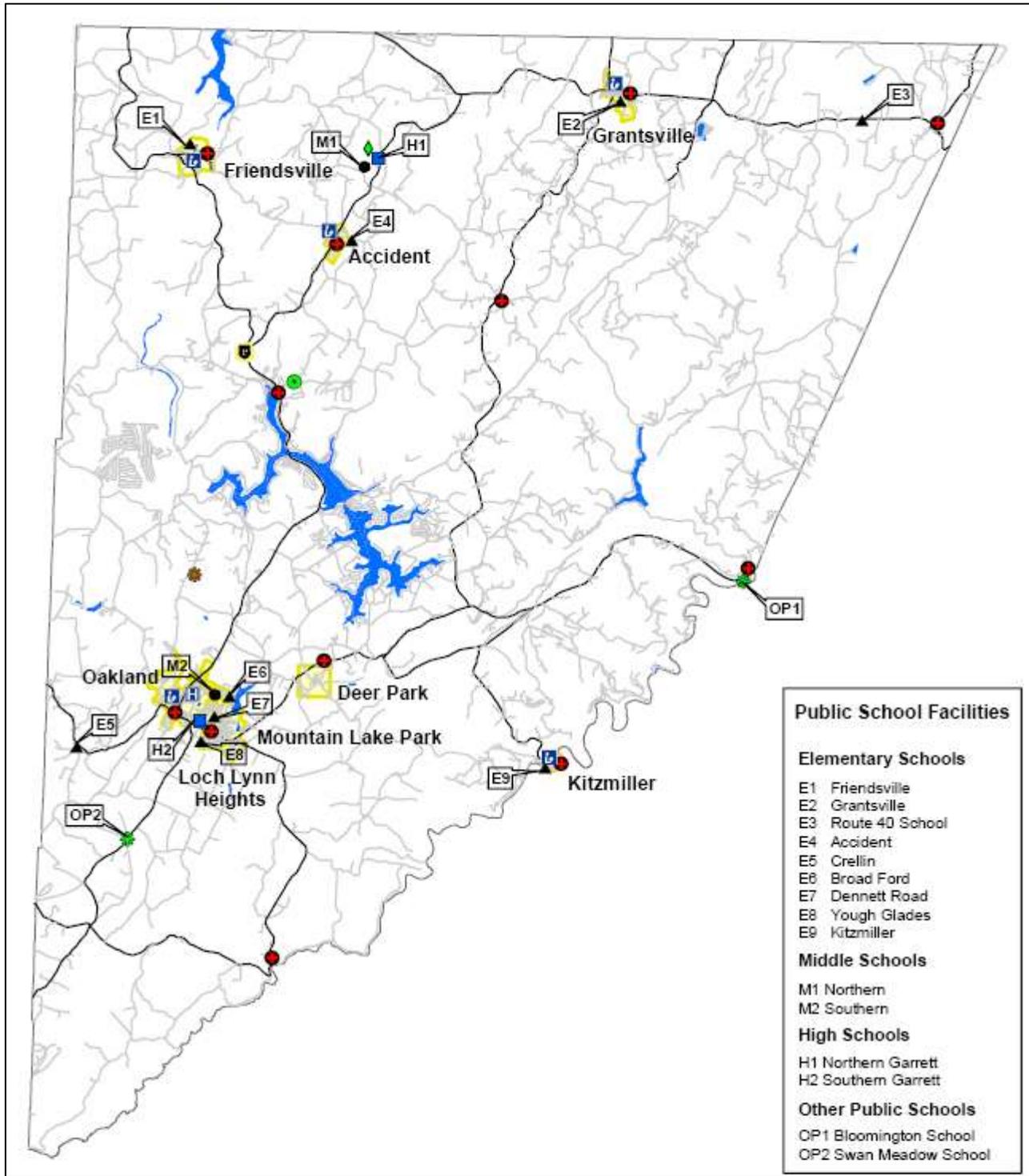


Figure 8-1: Community Facilities

Legend

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|-----------------------|--|-----------------------------|---------------|
| ▲ Elementary School | ◆ Hickory Environmental Education Center | ⓘ Garrett Memorial Hospital | ~ Major Roads |
| ● Middle School | ● Garrett College | 📖 Library | ~ Other Roads |
| ■ High School | ● Fire/EMS Station | ☼ Landfill | 🌊 Water |
| ● Other Public School | 👮 State Police | 🏘 Municipalities | |

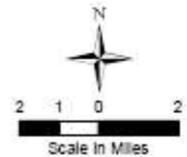


Table 8.2 GCPS Enrollment Trends and Projections, 1995-2015

	Elementary	Middle	High	Special Education	Total	Change from previous 5 years	
						Number	Percent
1995	2,324	1,255	1,487	12	5,078		
2000	2,346	1,110	1,318	39	4,813	-265	-5%
2005	1,940	1,155	1,479	0	4,574	-239	-5%
2010 ¹	1,840	950	1,420	0	4,210	-364	-8%
2015 ¹	1,720	940	1,200	0	3,860	-350	-8%

¹ 2007 Projection (Elementary enrollment for 2010 adjusted by 10 to account for rounding)

Source: Garrett County Public Schools Educational Facilities Master Plan FY 2007.

Each year, Garrett County Public Schools prepares an Educational Facilities Master Plan. This Plan identifies facilities and renovations needed to support projected enrollment and upgrade outdated facilities over the next ten years. While the enrollment projections show a decline through 2015, many of the educational facilities in the County need renovation. The FY 2007 Educational Facilities Master Plan calls for significant renovations at some schools.

The largest project is the renovation of the Northern Middle School, which was approved for construction to begin in FY 2008. The project will include the renovation of the existing 67,646 square feet and an addition of 16,362 square feet. Based on instructional program changes, geographic barriers, and facility age, the Board of Education is targeting Dennett Road and Kitzmiller Elementary Schools for renovation or possible replacement beginning in FY 2010.

8.3 Higher Education

Garrett College is the County’s only higher education facility. The College offers two-year Associate degrees in various fields, and focuses on students wishing to transfer to four-year universities. Approximately 750 students were enrolled at the College in 2007. Garrett College has recently established a number of signature programs, and has gained national reputation for its Adventure Sports Program, the first of its kind in the United States. Garrett College’s Natural Resources and Wildlife Technology program has also built a strong regional reputation, and the College offers Maryland’s only degree program in Juvenile Justice. Garrett College also offers a variety of noncredit educational opportunities through its Continuing Education and Workforce Development Division.

Garrett County offers full scholarships to Garrett College for any resident who receives a diploma from one of the County’s high schools. By encouraging a better educated workforce, this is one of the unique ways the County is supporting its economic development program.

Over the past five years many new facilities have been added to the Garrett College campus:

- Garrett Information Enterprise Center: A 20,000 square foot small business technology incubator building
- Garrett Hall: 60-bed residential housing complex located on campus
- Laker Hall: A 128 bed residential housing complex located on campus
- Learning Resource Center: A 20,000 square foot state-of-the-art library and classroom building

The County and Garrett College have secured funding to construct a Community Athletic and Recreation Center (CARC) on the Garrett College campus. The CARC will have an indoor

competition and recreation swimming pool, a 2,000-seat basketball arena, workout/weight training areas, an indoor track, a climbing wall, and regulation practice and competition gymnasiums. The CARC will also house a therapeutic medicine wing for the Garrett County Memorial Hospital as well as space for the College's Adventure Sports Program functions. Construction is anticipated to begin in 2008 with completion slated for Summer 2010.

An update of the Garrett College Facilities Master Plan is scheduled for completion in 2008. The campus footprint currently occupies approximately 45 of the 60 acres owned by the College. Additional land may be necessary to accommodate future growth, and there is land around the campus that could be used to meet future growth needs.

8.4 Fire/EMS (Emergency Management)

8.4.1 Existing Service

The County is served by 15 fire and/or EMS stations located throughout the County (Map 8.1). Eight of these stations provide both fire and medical first response, while three of the stations provide fire services only. There are Four EMS-only stations (including ambulance service) in the County, located in Mountain Lake Park, Grantsville, Friendsville, and at the Wisp Resort. Four other fire departments from neighboring counties in Maryland and West Virginia provide second-responder service

8.4.2 Discussion of Issues

Staffing and Service

While the number, size, and general geographical distribution of fire and EMS stations in the County is adequate to meet projected population growth and seasonal activity, a major issue faced by Garrett County's fire and EMS service is the decline in volunteerism. Because the County's fire and emergency services are staffed primarily by volunteers, the County is concerned that the lack of staff is making the emergency and fire services inadequate for current and projected needs.

Demand for both fire and emergency services continues to rise with the County's increased resident and visitor population. At the same time, expectations about the level of fire and EMS service are changing as visitors and new residents may expect the same levels of service that were provided in the more urbanized areas that they came from, levels sometimes higher than currently provided in Garrett County.

To address this issue, the County has created an Emergency Services Board to consider ways to address this issue. The Board is actively involved in volunteer recruitment and retention initiatives, including:

- Hiring a contractual employee to implement Emergency Services initiatives;
- Developing a length of service award program which would pay volunteers a retirement stipend after a set number of years of service
- Addressing personnel and equipment standards for stations and individual providers.

The Board has already negotiated for paid providers to augment the existing volunteer system.

Another major issue for Garrett County emergency services is the effect of vacation homes in the County. Development of vacation homes, especially around Deep Creek Lake, creates additional demand for services without offering a population base from which new volunteers can be recruited.

Facility Needs

The existing fire/EMS station located in McHenry is in a confined location, and responding units have longer response times than desired. Relocating the facility to a highway and out of the center of McHenry would allow for a larger facility and improved response times. There has been discussion about constructing a consolidated public services center on Route 219, north of McHenry. A relocated fire/EMS station could be part of this center.

8.5 Public Safety

8.5.1 Emergency Operations Plan

The Garrett County Department of Public Safety and Emergency Management is responsible for disaster planning, response, evacuation, sheltering, and hazard mitigation. The Director of Public Safety and Emergency Management serves as County Local Emergency Planning Committee Coordinator and also serves on the EMS Advisory Council, Traffic Advisory Council, and Fire and Rescue Association.

The Department of Public Safety and Emergency Management produces a County Emergency Operations Plan (EOP). The Plan’s purpose is to, “prescribe those activities to be taken by County government and officials to coordinate activities, provide support to the municipalities, and interface with the Maryland Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) for the purpose of protecting the lives and property of the citizens in the event of a natural, technological emergency, terrorism event or disaster”. The Department last updated the EOP in July 2004.

8.5.2 Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan

In 2005, the Department of Public Safety and Emergency Management completed a Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan, as required of all states and local jurisdictions by the Federal Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000. This plan assesses the County’s vulnerability to natural hazards and contains a long-term strategy for addressing these hazards and preventing future damage and loss of life. The Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan lists potential mitigation projects to be considered by the Department. The County’s vulnerability to specific hazards as presented in the plan is shown in Table 8.3.

Table 8.3: Garrett County’s Hazard Risks

High	Medium-High	Medium	Medium-Low	Low
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Winter weather 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stream flooding • High wind • Thunderstorms • Tornado • Soil movement • Dam failure • Transportation-fog related issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hurricanes • Wildfires • Epidemics • Hazardous materials transportation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drought • Fire/explosion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heat related issues

The Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan assesses the County’s vulnerability to each of these hazards and gives a full risk assessment followed by the County’s capabilities to handle each of the hazards. The plan presents a mitigation strategy with a set of goals and objectives which serve as the basis for implementing action items for mitigating the hazards described in the plan.

The plan also lists potential mitigation projects for the Office of Emergency Management. The plan's three top priority projects are listed in the policies and actions section of this chapter.

8.6 Law Enforcement (Police)

8.6.1 Responsibilities and Facilities

The Garrett County Sheriff's Office is the primary law enforcement provider in Garrett County. Maryland State Police Barracks W also provides police service. The Sheriff's office is located in Oakland, and has a satellite office in Grantsville that opened in 2006. There is also satellite office space available in Friendsville and Accident for emergency use. The Sheriff's Office staffs the Garrett County Detention Center which is also located in Oakland. Maryland State Police Barracks W is part of the Garrett County Public Safety complex at the intersection of Friendsville Road and US 219 north of McHenry. The state fire marshal and Natural Resources Police are also housed at this complex.

8.6.2 Staffing

As of February 2007, there were 55 sworn law enforcement personnel in Garrett County. The Sheriff's Office has 27 sworn officers, while the Maryland State Police has 28 troopers. State police work with the Garrett County Sheriff's Office to patrol roads, staff the Garrett County Narcotics Task Force, and assist the Garrett County Bureau of Investigation.

The Garrett County Detention Center has a capacity for 64 inmates. The inmate population in October 2007 was 39 persons.

8.6.3 Facility Needs

Approximately ten percent of the Sheriff's Office's time is currently devoted to the Deep Creek Lake area. The need for police services in this area is increasing as the number of vacation homes and tourist activities grows. With this growth, a satellite police station may be needed in as few as five years. Consideration should be given to providing space in association with a new public services center in or near McHenry (see Section 8.5.2). The current detention center is also in need of replacement.

8.7 Health Care

Garrett County's only hospital, the 76-bed non-profit Garrett County Memorial Hospital, is located in the Town of Oakland. The hospital offers a comprehensive range of diagnostic testing, emergency services, a maternity suite, a variety of inpatient services, a ten-bed sub-acute care unit, and numerous wellness programs. The hospital is the third largest employer in the County. It is staffed by 320 employees with services available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The hospital serves approximately 18,000 patients annually.

Garrett County Memorial Hospital's future plans include a Heart Catheterization Laboratory Center and a Comprehensive Care/Wound Care Center. However, the hospital recently completed a large expansion project and is now site-constrained. The hospital is in the process of trying to acquire land for these future needs.

Three nursing homes are located in the County: Goodwill Retirement Community in Grantsville, and Dennett Road Manor and Oakland Nursing and Rehabilitation center in Oakland.

The Garrett County Health Department provides a wide range of public health services through ten program divisions: Adult and Geriatric Services, Behavioral Health, Core Service Agency, Dental Health, Environmental Health, Health Education and Outreach, Healthy

Families, Home Health, Personal Health, and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC).

8.8 Solid Waste

8.8.1 Waste stream

Garrett County has one landfill, the Garrett County Solid Waste Disposal and Recycling Facility, located on Oakland Sang Run Road north of Oakland (see Map 8.1). The facility is operated by the Solid Waste and Recycling Division of the County's Department of General Services. In 2005, 37,246 tons of waste were received at the landfill. Of the total, approximately 34 percent was household waste, 30 percent was commercial waste (including industrial), 25 percent was construction and demolition debris, four percent was tree stumps, and one percent was composted yard waste. The County landfill has four permitted disposal cells, and has an expected life of approximately 22 years, through 2028.

8.8.2 Recycling

Under the Maryland Recycling Act (MRA) of 1989, Garrett County must recycle a minimum of 15 percent of the municipal solid waste generated within the County. The state recommends a recycling rate of 40 percent. Garrett County's MRA waste diversion rate for 2005 was approximately 47 percent.

In addition to the landfill, there are six recycling site locations in Garrett County: Kings Run/Mt. Nebo; Weber Road Crossing; the Backbone Mountain site located on Route 135 west of Swanton Hill Road; Bumble Bee Road; Friendsville; and Grantsville.

8.8.3 Future Needs

Since the County's landfill has capacity through 2028, a new landfill site during the life of the Comprehensive Plan is not expected. However, the next update of the County's Solid Waste Management Plan is scheduled for 2014 (approximately the same time as the next Comprehensive Plan update). As part of the Solid Waste Plan update, the General Services Department should consider in detail the need for additional landfill space. In the interim, the General Services Department will continue to monitor and evaluate population trends, recycling (which may tend to reduce landfill demand), alternatives to landfill disposal (such as incineration or similar technologies), and re-use of landfill methane (which is not currently a fiscally viable option).

8.9 Public Libraries

8.9.1 Library Facilities

The Ruth Enlow Library system, the public library system for Garrett County, consists of five branches: Oakland (branch and headquarters), Friendsville, Accident, Grantsville, and Kitzmiller. These five branches have a combined total floor area of approximately 24,000 square feet.

The combined collection of the five branches is approximately 90,000 volumes, approximately three books per capita (based on the 2005 population estimates). The library collection also includes other materials such as books on CD/tape, DVD/VHS videos, music CDs, and access to online subscription databases on a variety of topics.

The Ruth Enlow Library is a participant in the Western Maryland Public Libraries regional cooperative. In addition, all Maryland libraries share resources through a statewide inter-library loan program, allowing Garrett County to provide a combined catalog that offers

access to a wider variety of materials than would be possible as a totally separate county library system.

8.9.2 Future Needs

The library system has identified three facility needs:

- The Oakland branch was built in 1950 and remodeled in 1969. This building needs more space, modern wiring and greater parking capacity.
- The Friendsville branch shares a building with the Friendsville Town Hall. The building is a 40 year old temporary classroom that had an intended life span of 30 years.
- The Kitzmiller branch is in the Kitzmiller Elementary School, a building in need of renovation. The demand for computer time has also created the need for more floor space to support more computer stations in order to meet the need.

8.10 Exhibition Center

The County has for many years pursued the possibility of developing a new Exhibition Center in the Deep Creek Lake Influence Area. An Exhibition Center could be used for small conferences, public, and private events. Originally envisioned as being built in the Thayerville area, the Exhibition Center is now more likely to be built at the Fairgrounds in McHenry. The exact size and cost of this facility are yet to be determined.

8.11 Policies and Actions

1. Work with Garrett County Public Schools and the Garrett County Board of Education to address on-going and future facility needs.
2. Work with Garrett College to address future land use needs for expansion based on future growth.
3. Support efforts to recruit and retain volunteer fire and EMS staff, augmented by paid providers where appropriate.
4. Support relocation of the McHenry fire/emergency services station to a location on US 219 north of McHenry.
5. Implement the following three highest-priority mitigation projects in the Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan:
 - Revise the Emergency Operations and Hazardous Materials Response Plan;
 - Expand the duties and involvement of the Local Emergency Planning Committee;
 - Expand training and exercise opportunities.
6. Identify an appropriate location in the Deep Creek Lake area for a Sheriff's Office satellite station, in order to meet the expected need for services in that area. Consider co-location with the relocated fire/EMS station in a public services center.
7. As part of the next Solid Waste Master Plan and Comprehensive Plan update (both approximately scheduled for 2014), evaluate the need for a new or expanded County landfill.
8. Work with Garrett County Memorial Hospital to address future land needs for expansion purposes.
9. Support renovations and upgrades to library facilities at the Oakland, Friendsville and Kitzmiller branches.
10. Support development of an Exhibition Center in the Deep Creek Lake Influence Area.