

# **Garrett County Planning Commission Minutes**

## **March 6, 2024**

- I. Call to Order-** Chairman Tony Doerr called the regular meeting of the Garrett County Planning Commission to order at 1:30 pm on March 6, 2024, in the County Commissioners Meeting Room in the Garrett County Courthouse.
- II. Attendance-** Commission members: Tony Doerr, Tim Schwinabart, Liz Georg, Bruce Swift, Julie Friend, Larry Tichnell and Billy Weissgerber. Planning staff: Chad Fike, Bruce Metz and Siera Wigfield. Public: Aaron Teets of Century Engineering.
- III. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes-** The minutes were approved as presented.
- IV. Reports of Officers-**None.
- V. Old Business-** The Planning Commission continued a discussion of a Deep Creek Watershed Zoning Ordinance amendment to allow farm wineries that was presented during the February meeting. The Planning Commission is open to the general idea of farm wineries, breweries, distilleries and cideries being allowed in the Watershed. The use would potentially be allowed in the residential areas of the Watershed where agricultural uses are permitted but commercial, manufacturing and retail uses are restricted. Therefore, the Commission agreed that the proposal needed to be tied to the agricultural aspect of the farm in order to protect the surrounding residential areas, but there was no agreement about how exactly to regulate the required amount of, or timing of, on-site production. The Commission agreed to continue discussing the topic and looking for a viable solution.
- VI. New Business –**
  - a) Deep Creek Watershed Zoning Appeals Cases-**
    - **VR-838-** An application submitted by Kayla Evans for a Variance to allow the construction of a residential addition to within 8’ of the side property line. The property is located at 208 Upper Penn Point Drive, tax map 66, parcel 154, grid 24 and is zoned Lake Residential 1. The Planning Commission made no formal comments.
    - **SE-507 -** An application submitted by Outdoor Contractors Inc. on behalf of Two Farms Inc. T/A Royal Farms for a Special Exception for a Convenience Store with Automobile Service Station. The property is located along Garrett Highway, tax map 58, parcel 424, grid 16 and is zoned Town Center. The Planning Commission unanimously approved a motion recommending that the Board of Appeals consider pedestrian access when they review the case.

- **VR-839** - An application submitted by David & Cynthia Myerberg for a Variance to allow the construction of a deck to within 0' of the rear property line. The property is located at 270 Ezra Savage Road, tax map 66, parcel 218, grid 24 and is zoned Lake Residential 1. The Planning Commission made no formal comments.
  
- b) **Casselman River Ventures Waiver Request.** Aaron Teets of Century Engineering presented a request for waivers from the major subdivision and right of way requirements of the Garrett County Subdivision Ordinance. The request was made on behalf of Casselman River Ventures, LLC and pertains to their property (Tax Map 8, Parcel 94) located off Old New Germany Road in a Town Residential Land Classification. After discussion, the Planning Commission unanimously granted waivers to allow two proposed lots to be treated as a minor subdivision accessed by an existing private driveway within an existing 20' right of way. The Planning Commission recommended that a legal agreement be formed to provide for maintenance of the shared driveway.
  
- c) **Transportation Priority Letter Update-** Siera Wigfield reviewed the Transportation Priority Letter that is annually sent to MDOT. The Letter is included with these minutes. The Planning Commission reviewed the priorities then unanimously approved a motion to approve the 2024 Transportation Priority Letter and forward it to the County Commissioners for their final review and approval.
  
- d) **Next Meeting** – May 1, 2024 (April meeting cancelled due to lack of agenda items)
  
- e) **Adjournment-** Chairman Tony Doerr adjourned the meeting at 2:34 pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Chad Fike, Assistant Director

# THE BOARD OF GARRETT COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

203 South Fourth Street - Courthouse - Room 207 Oakland, Maryland 21550  
www.garrettcountry.org countycommissioners@garrettcountry.org  
301-334-8970 301-895-3188 FAX 301-334-5000

## Board of Commissioners

Paul C. Edwards  
Ryan S. Savage  
S. Larry Tichnell

## County Administrator

Kevin G. Null

## County Attorney

Gorman E. Getty III

March 19, 2024

The Honorable Paul J. Wiedefeld  
Maryland Transportation Secretary  
Maryland Department of Transportation  
7201 Corporate Center Drive  
Hanover, Maryland 21076

## RE: GARRETT COUNTY 2024 TRANSPORTATION PRIORITIES

Dear Transportation Secretary Paul J. Wiedefeld:

Garrett County extends its gratitude for MDOT's pivotal role in our transportation advances. We present our strategic projects for FY 2025–2030 CTP consideration, building on our collaborative success to meet our evolving needs. As we continue to build on this foundation, we are pleased to present our updated priorities for consideration in the FY 2025–2030 Consolidated Transportation Plan (CTP). This letter not only reflects our appreciation for the progress achieved thus far but also underscores the critical need for continued collaboration to address the evolving transportation needs of Garrett County.

We appreciate MDOT's support for Garrett County projects:

- Bikeways Funding for the Pedestrian & Bicycle Concept Plan Connecting Towns along MD 135
- Bikeways Funding for Oakland to Herrington Manor State Park Trail Feasibility Study
- Rec Trails Funding for Bloomington Community Park Path Improvements

The bikeways funding projects are set to be underway this summer and fall. We are hopeful that the successful implementation of these projects will inspire future priority letters with transformative projects that continue to enhance the quality of life in Garrett County.

In the spirit of fostering a more secure and connected Garrett County, we solicit MDOT's alliance. Our "Garrett Pathways to Safety" SS4A grant proposal seeks to revolutionize county mobility, focusing on community-driven, multimodal safety enhancements, particularly along state-owned routes. We seek MDOT's partnership for this transformative pursuit.

Aligned with Chapter 725 standards and our persistent efforts to improve local transportation infrastructure, we respectfully present our carefully selected priority projects for MDOT's evaluation in the upcoming CTP cycle. These projects, chosen through extensive collaboration with county officials, municipalities, and community stakeholders, are designed to meet the collective needs of Garrett County. Each initiative represents a crucial step toward enhancing safety, accessibility, and connectivity, furthering economic development, and supporting environmental sustainability. Our dedication to closely collaborating with MDOT and SHA is unwavering, as we strive for the impactful realization of these projects on our community.

We are committed to working with MDOT SHA to ensure the successful implementation of this project.

### I. US 219 North Extension to Pennsylvania Stateline

Garrett County and the Town of Grantsville request continuation of engineering and ROW funding for the US 219 North Extension to the Pennsylvania Stateline. Our PennDOT counterparts have made progress by engaging the public and narrowing down alignment options. We urge MDOT to maintain its commitment to this project and is ready to advance to construction as additional Transportation Trust Fund revenues become available. This project is vital for regional connectivity and economic development, promising to enhance access, reduce travel times, and increase reliability for freight and passenger vehicles alike.

## 2. US 219 Safety Improvements near Trader's Landing

Garrett County requests MDOT/SHA to continue its support by allocating design & engineering for the US 219 Safety Improvements near Trader's Landing. Following a productive stakeholder meeting in the fall of 2022, where MDOT SHA and Garrett County presented an overview of the current conditions and multiple options for safety improvements, in collaboration with stakeholder the project's scope has been refined. The project now extends from the US 219 bridge to Trader's Landing, with a focus on restriping and other active transportation safety enhancements. In collaboration with local business owners, we request D&E funding and construction to proceed with these critical safety improvements, enhancing the well-being of both pedestrians and motorists in this key area of our community.

## 3. Grantsville Sidewalk Extension on Alt US 40 to River Road

Garrett County, in conjunction with the Town of Grantsville, requests MDOT's support for the Grantsville Sidewalk Extension Project on Alt US 40 to River Road, with an additional request for a crosswalk at Penn Alps to the Casselman River access. This project is essential for safe pedestrian connectivity to the Spruce Forest Artisan Village, a key site for heritage tourism and economic development, attracting over 60,000 visitors annually. The proposed sidewalk will extend from the eastern limit of Grantsville to River Road, enhancing access to the Village and the State Park, and promoting pedestrian safety in an area with high foot traffic. The feasibility study has shown that the project is viable, avoiding major structural impacts and minimizing the increase in impervious areas. The total cost estimate for the sidewalk extension and the crosswalk is \$3.9 million. We believe this project will significantly improve the safety, accessibility, and overall quality of life for residents and visitors alike, and we appreciate your consideration of our request.

## 4. US 219 Oakland Bypass

Garrett County, alongside the Town of Oakland, continues to request design and engineering funding for the US 219 Oakland Bypass, this 2.4-mile bypass, extending from north of Oakland to MD 135, as a pivotal project for our community's future. This initiative is not just about rerouting traffic; it's about fostering a safer, more vibrant Oakland by alleviating downtown congestion and enhancing the area's appeal for economic development and tourism.

The bypass is integral to our comprehensive transportation strategy, which includes the Oakland Pathways SS4A application. Our goal is to ensure these projects complement each other, enhancing connectivity without hindering the bypass's future development.

We are requesting MDOT move this project forward in a way that respects community input and leverages the bypass's potential to improve safety, stimulate economic growth, and preserve Oakland's unique character. Your continued partnership is crucial to realizing the vision of a connected, thriving Garrett County.

## 5. Loch Lynn Trail Accessibility Enhancements

Garrett County, in partnership with the Town of Loch Lynn Heights, respectfully requests funding from the Recreational Trails Program for the *Loch Lynn Trail Accessibility Enhancements* project. This initiative aims to retrofit and re-deck the existing boardwalks along the .75-mile Loch Lynn Community Trail to ensure ADA compliance and enhance accessibility for all users. The project will focus on removing barriers such as bollards and adding bump-outs for mobility devices, thereby promoting inclusivity, and ensuring that the trail remains a valuable asset for educational exploration and recreational enjoyment. With an estimated total project cost of \$165,000, our immediate goal is to secure design funding to lay the groundwork for these critical improvements. This project not only addresses the need for maintenance and safety enhancements but also aligns with our commitment to environmental stewardship and community well-being.

## 6. Garrett County Transit Operating & Capital Funding

Garrett County, in partnership with Garrett County Community Action, requests increased operational and capital funding for the Garrett Transit Service for FY 2025. Our locally operated system is committed to providing safe, reliable, and affordable services to our residents. To continue our mission, we seek additional operational funding to ensure competitive wages for our drivers and dispatchers, which is crucial for retaining their invaluable services. Additionally, our request includes capital funding for preventative maintenance of our vehicles and facilities, as well as the acquisition of three accessible vans and a 12-passenger bus. These resources are essential for sustaining the high-quality transit services the Garrett County community depends on. This investment will ensure our fleet remains in optimal condition and our facilities are fully equipped to meet service needs. Ultimately, it will benefit the entire community by improving the accessibility and reliability of public transportation.

## 7. Fork Run Intermediate Mountain Bike Trail

Garrett County requests construction funds from the Recreational Trails Program for the development of the Fork Run Intermediate Mountain Bike Trail. Nestled within a 550-acre county-owned park, Fork Run's current trail network includes a .6-mile Acorn Trail, catering to adaptive and beginner levels, and multiple intermediate to black diamond trails offering 3 to 8-mile loops. Our goal is to construct an adaptive intermediate trail, bridging the gap between novice and

expert paths, and expanding access to a broader spectrum of outdoor enthusiasts. This initiative reflects our dedication to inclusive recreation and the continued enhancement of our natural spaces.

**8. MD 135 to Sand Flat Road to MD 219 Operational and Intersection Improvements**

Garrett County requests engineering funding from MDOT SHA for functional improvements to the corridor connecting MD 135, Sand Flat Road, and MD 219. Following the insights of the 2021 US 219 Truck Corridor Study, this project aims to widen shoulders to ten feet, enhance intersection geometries, and address safety and efficiency for all road users. These enhancements are vital for reducing congestion, facilitating smoother traffic flow, and promoting regional connectivity and economic vitality. Engineering funding will enable the detailed planning and design necessary to bring these much needed to the next phase to see completion in the future.

**9. Grantsville, MD 669 Sidewalk Expansion**

The Town of Grantsville is expanding water and sewer service along MD 669 and would like to request funding from MDOT for the inclusion of sidewalks along the planned development area.

**10. Broadford Lake Accessible Fishing Path**

Garrett County and the Town of Oakland request design funding for the Broadford Lake Accessible Fishing Path. This initiative seeks to create a walkway leading from the existing parking area to a new dock, enhancing fishing access for all anglers. The path will provide safe, direct access to key fishing areas on Broadford Lake, leveraging existing parking without the need for expansion. This project emphasizes our dedication to inclusive recreation, ensuring all anglers can fully enjoy Broadford Lake's resources.

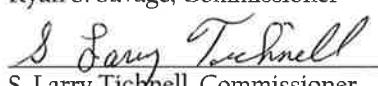
Attached, you will find the supporting project information for each of our priority projects. We value the opportunity to collaborate with MDOT and are committed to efficiently moving transportation projects forward to serve the needs of our constituents.

Respectfully,

THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF  
GARRET COUNTY

  
Paul C. Edwards, Chairman

  
Ryan S. Savage, Commissioner

  
S. Larry Tichnell, Commissioner

GARRETT COUNTY GENERAL  
ASSEMBLY MEMBERS

Senator Michael W. McKay, District 1

Delegate James C. Hinebaugh, Jr., District 1A

MUNICIPAL ELECTED OFFICIALS OF  
GARRETT COUNTY

Richard W. Carlson, Mayor, Town of Accident

Donald E. Dawson, Mayor, Town of Deer Park

Spencer R. Schlosnagle, Mayor, Town of Friendsville

Emily Newman-Edwards Mayor, Town of Grantsville

Robert L. Reckart, Mayor, Town of Kitzmiller

Carolyn S. Corley, Mayor, Town of Loch Lynn Heights

Donald W. Sincell, Mayor, Town of Mountain Lake Park

Kathy B. Shaffer, Mayor, Town of Oakland

Enclosures:

Project Summary Table and Maps

cc:

David Cotton, Maryland Department of Planning

Heather Murphy, Office of Planning and Capital Programming, Maryland Department of Transportation

Linda Zerbee Puffenbarger, District Engineer District 6 State Highway Administration

Matt Baker State Highway Administration

Sean Varsolona, State Highway Administration

Tyson Byrne, Manager, Regional Planning, Office of Planning and Capital Programming, Maryland Department of Transportation

Travis Johnston, Director Office of Local Transit Support, Maryland Transit Administration

Kevin Null, Administrator, Garrett County

Siera Wigfield, Senior Planner, Garrett County

Jay Moyer, Director of Public Works:

Josh Spiker , Director of Garrett Trails

Chrisopher Mullett, President Garrett County Community Action

Micheal Hill, Director Garrett Transit System