



Garrett County Government Department of Community Development
Planning & Land Management Division

203 South Fourth Street, Room 208, Oakland, Maryland 21550
garrettcountrymd.gov/community-development/planning-land-management

Garrett County Planning Commission Minutes March 4, 2026

1. **Call to Order-** Tony Doerr called the regular meeting of the Garrett County Planning Commission to order at 1:30 pm in the County Commissioners Meeting Room in the Garrett County Courthouse.
2. **Attendance-** Planning Commission members: Tony Doerr, Tim Schwinabart, Liz Georg, Bruce Swift, Julie Friend, Terah Crawford and Larry Tichnell. Planning staff: Chad Fike, Siera Wigfield, Bruce Metz and Eli Helbig.
3. **Approval of Minutes-** The previous meeting minutes were approved as presented.
4. **Reports, Updates and Announcements-** None
5. **Deep Creek Watershed Zoning Appeals Cases:**
 - None
6. **Subdivisions:**
 - **Gallagher & Humberson Waiver-** Mark Gallagher & Tammy Humberson submitted a request for a waiver from the minimum lot area standards in the Garrett County Subdivision Ordinance. The property (Map 14, Parcel 4) located at 44 Old Morgantown Road East is in a Rural Land Classification that requires a minimum lot area of 1 acre. The waiver is necessary because Parcel 4 only contains 0.64 acres and cannot be further subdivided or adjusted in a way that makes it any more nonconforming in terms of lot area. The Planning Commission voted unanimously, with one abstention, to approve the waiver request. The request was contingent on a requirement that any future subdivision will require a deed restriction stating that the residual of Parcel 4 must be conveyed with the adjacent property at 1834 Friendsville Addison Road.
7. **Proposed Deep Creek Watershed Zoning Ordinance Amendment-** The Planning Commission continued to discuss a proposed amendment submitted by Jay Kolb of Belle Lea, LLC. A decision on the amendment to change the zoning classification of the property at 485 Boy Scout Road (Map 66, Parcel 68) from Lake Residential 2 (LR-2) to Commercial Resort 1 (CR-1) was tabled by the Commission during their February meeting. The property, currently occupied by the Pawn Run Bar + Kitchen,

has operated as a tavern since before zoning was adopted in 1975. The Deep Creek Watershed Zoning Ordinance states that zoning classification amendments may be granted upon a finding that there was a substantial change in the character of the neighborhood or a mistake in the existing zoning classification. Otherwise, the change could be considered “spot zoning” and deemed illegal. The Planning Commission could not reach consensus whether those standards had been met and voted unanimously, with one abstention, to forward the proposed amendment request to the Board of Garrett County Commissioners without any formal recommendations. After the meeting, the applicant informed staff that they had decided not to pursue the zoning classification amendment at this time.

- 8. 2026 Transportation Priorities-** Siera Wigfield presented the proposed transportation projects to be included in the County’s 2026 Transportation Priorities Letter. After discussion, the Commission approved the final draft by a vote of 5 to 1 with County Commissioner Tichnell abstaining. The final draft of the letter is attached to these minutes.
- 9. Proposed Amendment to the Water & Sewer Master Plan -**Siera Wigfield updated the Commission on Water & Sewer Master Plan amendments related to proposed improvements to the Friendsville Water & Sewer systems and Gorman Water system. The Commission voted unanimously, with Commissioner Tichnell abstaining, to approve the Amendment and forward it on to the County Commissioners for their final approval.
- 10. Election of Officers-** Current officers, Chairman Tony Doerr, Vice Chairman Liz Georg and Secretary Jeff Messenger were reelected by a unanimous vote.
- 11. Adjournment –** Chairman Tony Doerr adjourned the meeting at 2:42 pm.

Minutes submitted by Chad Fike, Assistant Director

The Honorable Katie Thomson
Maryland Acting Transportation Secretary
Maryland Department of Transportation
7201 Corporate Center Drive
Hanover, Maryland 21076

RE: Garrett County 2026 Transportation Priorities

Dear Acting Transportation Secretary Katie Thomson,

Garrett County respectfully submits this 2026 Priority Letter listing our prioritized transportation projects for consideration in the Maryland Department of Transportation's development of the FY 2027–2032 Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP). Garrett County recognizes the fiscal challenges currently facing Maryland's transportation program and appreciates MDOT's continued focus on system preservation, operational efficiency, and strategic investment. These considerations guided our coordinated planning efforts in developing this list of projects with Garrett County municipalities, community partners, and residents.

Garrett County would also like to thank the MDOT for its continued partnership and investment in our communities through programs such as the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) and the Recreational Trails Program (RTP). Recent awards supporting pedestrian and recreation improvements in Grantsville, Crellin, and Broadford Park are helping advance projects that improve safety, expand outdoor recreation opportunities, and improve connections for vulnerable roadway users (VRUs). These investments demonstrate how strategic State and local partnerships can deliver meaningful improvements to quality of life in rural Maryland.

Additionally, we look forward to MDOT's partnership on our Garrett Pathways to Safety project which was awarded by the Federal Highway Administration's Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) program. This project consists of:

- Development the Garrett County Active and Alternative Transportation Master Plan to enhance safety, connectivity, and multimodal transportation options throughout the county.
- Conduct detailed safety and traffic analysis along critical corridors, including US 219, MD 135, and MD 39, as well as the local road network in the Oakland area, to identify high-risk areas and prioritize safety improvements.
- Following studies and analyses above, we have funding for construction of a quick-build demonstration project to carry out the findings.

Consistent with Maryland's Chapter 725 coordination process, these priorities were reviewed with Garrett County municipalities on February 4, 2026, and signed by the Garrett County Board of Commissioners on March 17, 2026 at the public meeting. The following priorities reflect a shared commitment to improving our transportation system to support residents, businesses, and visitors throughout Garrett County.

Each project represents an opportunity to advance safety, improve connectivity, and support economic vitality while continuing Garrett County's collaboration with MDOT to deliver improvements to our transportation system efficiently and effectively.

1. US 219 North Extension to Pennsylvania Stateline

Garrett County and the Town of Grantsville request MDOT to program funding for design and right-of-way for the US 219 North Extension between Old Salisbury Road and the Pennsylvania State Line (approximately 1.5 miles). This project will complete the final segment of the U.S. 219 corridor connecting I-68 in Maryland to the four-lane section of U.S. 219 in Pennsylvania, improving regional connectivity, freight mobility, and economic development in the Appalachian region.

We are pleased the project has reached a significant milestone with the Federal Highway Administration issuing the Record of Decision selecting Alternative E-Shift Modified after completion and review of the Final Environmental Impact Statement. With PennDOT leading project development in coordination with MDOT, Garrett County supports continued progress of this Appalachian Development Highway System (ADHS) segment.

2. MD 135 Shared Use Path

Garrett County, in partnership with the Towns of Oakland, Mountain Lake Park, and Loch Lynn Heights, requests MDOT program funding to advance the MD 135 Shared Use Path corridor project. This initiative is envisioned as a transformative project that will establish a backbone network of safe VRU infrastructure along the MD 135 corridor, improving safety for vulnerable roadway users, calming traffic speeds, and strengthening connections between neighborhoods, schools, parks, and local businesses. The MD 135 Pedestrian and Bicycle Pathways Concept Design was completed in Spring 2026, identifying a preferred corridor alignment and phased improvements to address safety concerns such as limited pedestrian infrastructure, and unsafe crossings. Garrett County and its municipal partners request MDOT's partnership to advance the project into design and implementation.

3. US 219 Safety Improvements near Trader's Landing

Garrett County requests MDOT/SHA to continue efforts to enhance safety along US 219 near Trader's Landing, within the corridor extending from the US 219 bridge over Deep Creek Lake to the Glendale Road intersection. This project addresses longstanding safety and operational concerns along a heavily traveled commercial segment of the corridor by improving turning movements, access management, and roadway operations at Trader's Landing. The project was developed in partnership with MDOT SHA to reduce crash risk and improve traffic flow in this area. Improvements planned for construction this year were refined through ongoing coordination with local stakeholders. Garrett County appreciates MDOT's continued collaboration and looks forward to these improvements, which will enhance safety for both motorists and vulnerable roadway users along this important segment of US 219.

4. Garrett County Transit Operating & Capital Funding

Garrett Transit Services (GTS) requests funding to expand and sustain essential public transportation services in Garrett County through the implementation of the county's first fixed-route transit service under the 5307 program, adjusting 5311 funding for critical out-of-county medical transportation, and investing in scheduling software upgrades to improve efficiency. Capital funding is also requested to support preventative maintenance, vehicle replacements, facility security modernization, and sustainability initiatives such as stormwater management, gray water reuse, solar energy integration, structural reinforcement, parking lot resurfacing, energy efficiency audits, and a bus wash water reclamation feasibility study. Collectively, these investments will enhance service quality, resilience, accessibility, and operational efficiency, promoting economic growth and community well-being throughout Garrett County.

5. Grantsville Sidewalk Extension on Alt US 40 to River Road

The Town of Grantsville, in partnership with Garrett County, requests funding for construction for pedestrian pathways (approximately 2,000 feet of 5-foot-wide sidewalk) along the north side of Alt US 40 to River Road. This project will enhance pedestrian safety and connectivity between Casselman Bridge Statepark, the Spruce Forest Artisan Village, Grantsville's Main Street, and nearby residential areas, addressing a key gap identified in the 2020 Grantsville Sidewalk Feasibility Study. The project is estimated to cost \$1.86 million (adjusted for inflation) and will benefit from FHWA's Thriving Communities Program technical assistance. In addition to our request to MDOT to advance this project, the County and Town intend to apply for discretionary grants. Securing funding for this project will promote pedestrian safety, enhance walkability, and support tourism and local economic development. Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) funding has been awarded for project design, and the Town and County are pursuing additional federal funding opportunities to support implementation. Garrett County and the Town of Grantsville request MDOT's partnership to advance this project through construction and delivery using SHA project delivery processes and contractors, improving pedestrian safety along this important segment of Alt US 40.

6. 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, is 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. The Garrett Pathways to Safety project, funded by SS4A will build upon MDOT's 2021 US 219 Truck Corridor Study - Alternative Route Assessment for Oakland, Maryland, to further planning of potential truck corridor, support traffic growth, and improve roadway safety. Our goal is to ensure these projects complement each other, enhancing connectivity without hindering the bypass's future development. We are requesting MDOT to 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.

7. Oakland to Herrington Manor State Park Trail

Garrett County requests MDOT program funding to advance the Oakland to Herrington Manor State Park Trail into design, permitting, and right-of-way acquisition. This project will create a shared-use trail connection between the Town of Oakland and Herrington Manor State Park, expanding safe walking and bicycling opportunities while strengthening connections between communities, parks, and regional recreation assets. A feasibility study was completed in Spring 2026, identifying a preferred corridor and confirming the project’s potential to improve multimodal connectivity and support tourism and outdoor recreation in Garrett County. Garrett County looks forward to continuing its partnership with MDOT, Maryland DNR, and local municipalities to advance this project toward implementation.

8. Friendsville Complete Streets Plan

Garrett County, in partnership with the Town of Friendsville, requests MDOT program funding to develop a Complete Streets Plan that evaluates transportation improvements at a system level throughout the community. While Friendsville has a compact and walkable town center, several sidewalk, crossing, and traffic safety gaps limit safe access between neighborhoods, schools, parks, and local businesses. This planning effort would apply MDOT Complete Streets guidance to identify and prioritize improvements for pedestrians, bicyclists, and other vulnerable roadway users while creating a clear pipeline of implementable projects. The plan will position the Town and County to advance targeted safety and connectivity improvements through future state and federal funding opportunities.

9. Loch Lynn Trail Accessibility Enhancements

Garrett County, in partnership with the Town of Loch Lynn Heights, requests MDOT program funding to advance accessibility and trail improvements within the Loch Lynn trail network. This project will enhance accessibility for pedestrians, bicyclists, and individuals with mobility challenges while improving connections between residential neighborhoods, parks, and community destinations. Planned improvements include trail surface upgrades, accessibility enhancements, and interpretive signage highlighting the area’s natural and cultural resources. These enhancements will expand recreation opportunities, improve trail usability for residents and visitors, and support Loch Lynn’s role as a gateway to Garrett County’s outdoor recreation network.

10. Community Speed Safety and Monitoring – Phase I

Garrett County, in partnership with the Towns of Friendsville, Loch Lynn Heights, Grantsville, Deer Park, Accident, Mountain Lake Park, Oakland, and Kitzmiller, requests MDOT support for Phase I of a community speed safety and monitoring initiative. This project will deploy speed monitoring and safety feedback equipment in targeted locations to improve driver awareness, collect traffic data, and reduce speeding in areas where residents, pedestrians, and school-age children are present. The program will help local jurisdictions identify high-risk corridors and support targeted safety improvements and enforcement strategies. Garrett County and its municipal partners are pursuing funding through the Maryland Highway Safety Office (MHSO) and look forward to continuing collaboration with MDOT to improve roadway safety across our communities.

11. Crellin Street Sidewalk Replacement – Crellin

Garrett County requests MDOT program construction funding for the Crellin Street Sidewalk Replacement project, which will replace and upgrade approximately 2,600 feet of sidewalk to improve pedestrian safety and accessibility in the Crellin community. This project will provide ADA-compliant pedestrian infrastructure along a key local roadway serving Crellin Elementary School, nearby residences, and community destinations. Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) funding has been awarded to complete design and permitting, positioning the project to advance toward construction. Garrett County looks forward to partnering with MDOT SHA to deliver construction of these improvements, enhancing walkability and safety for residents and students.

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 serving the needs of our constituents.

Sincerely,

**THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF
GARRETT 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

Larry F. Friend, Mayor, Town of Loch Lynn Heights

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

Andrew M. Sauder, Mayor, Town of Oakland

Enclosures:
Project Summary Table and Maps

Cc:

David Cotton, Maryland Department of Planning

Korey Layman, Maryland Department of Planning

Geoff Anderson, Office of Planning and Capital Programming, Maryland Department of Transportation

Linda Zerbee Puffenbarger, District Engineer District 6 State Highway Administration

Sean Varsolona, State Highway Administration

Ray Moravec, Director of Office of Planning and Preliminary Engineering

Shawn Kiernan, 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

Paul Harvey, Garrett County Roads Division Chief

Josh Spiker, President of Garrett Trails

Christopher Mullett, President Garrett County Community Action

Cody Kroll, Director Garrett Transit System