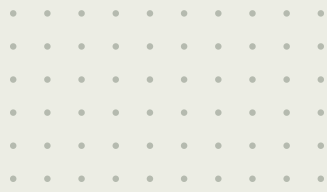


2025



# Oakland

## Comprehensive Plan



A HISTORIC SMALL TOWN

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Oakland Mayor and Town Council express their appreciation to the many people, agencies and organizations who assisted in gathering information, ideas and input for this report.

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Many additional individuals and organizations contributed to the plan via public and stakeholder outreach.

The Comprehensive Plan was prepared with assistance from:



Insert Resolution

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A photograph of a yellow wooden building with a green roof and a small tower, featuring a large gazebo in the foreground. The building has a sign that says 'MUSEUM' vertically. The gazebo is white with a green roof and a yellow interior. The foreground is a brick path and green grass.

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

MUSEUM



# COMPREHENSIVE PLAN REQUIREMENTS

## THE PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

A Comprehensive Plan is the official policy framework adopted by the Town Council and approved by the Planning Commission of Oakland, serving as a strategic blueprint for guiding future growth and development. It provides a unified approach for public and private decision-making, forming the foundation for policies, programs, priority projects, and legislative actions, including zoning and subdivision regulations, as well as other initiatives that align with the Town's growth objectives.

As an integrated and comprehensive document, the Plan encompasses the entire geographic area of Oakland, potential annexation areas, and anticipated growth zones beyond the current corporate boundaries. It addresses critical elements of physical development, such as transportation, land use, water resources, housing, economic development, and community facilities. By offering a broad, inclusive, and long-range vision, the Plan outlines overarching goals and strategies without delving into detailed regulations or precise locations.

The Plan's forward-looking nature ensures it addresses both current challenges and future opportunities, promoting sustainable growth and a well-planned future for the community. It serves as a holistic guide to evaluate and direct development, fostering an integrated approach

## REQUIRED PROCEDURE FOR PLAN DEVELOPMENT

Maryland state law designates Planning Commissions as the primary entities responsible for developing Comprehensive Plans. Once the Planning Commission finalizes a plan, it submits its recommendations to the legislative body—the Mayor and Council—for consideration. The State Land Use Article outlines specific procedural requirements for plan adoption, including a mandatory review period of at least 60 days during which the draft plan is shared with the State of Maryland and relevant state organizations.

Before adoption, the Planning Commission must hold at least one public hearing, with advance notice published in the local newspaper of record. The Planning Commission then recommends adoption of the plan to the local legislative body. The local legislative body can hold its own public hearing and deliberate on the plan at its regularly scheduled meeting or following the hearing. In keeping with this established process, this document reflects extensive community engagement throughout its development, from the initial kick-off to its final adoption.

# MARYLAND TWELVE PLANNING VISIONS

The “Twelve Visions” form the cornerstone of Maryland’s state growth policy and Smart Growth programs, serving as a critical framework for implementing sound planning and development practices. These visions outline broad state policy goals that municipalities aim to achieve through their own tailored planning and growth strategies. In this latest Comprehensive Plan update, each of the Twelve Visions has been addressed through specific policy recommendations integrated into the relevant chapters.

- 1. *Quality of Life and Sustainability:*** A high quality of life is achieved through universal stewardship of the land, water and air resulting in sustainable communities and protection of the environment.
- 2. *Public Participation:*** Citizens are active partners in the planning and implementation of community initiatives and are sensitive to their responsibilities in achieving community goals.
- 3. *Growth Areas:*** Growth is concentrated in existing population and business centers, growth areas adjacent to these centers, or strategically selected new centers.
- 4. *Community Design:*** Compact, mixed-use, walkable design consistent with existing community character and located near transit options is encouraged to ensure efficient use of land and transportation resources and preservation and enhancement of natural systems, open spaces, recreational areas, and historical, cultural, and archaeological resources.
- 5. *Infrastructure:*** Growth areas have the water resources and infrastructure to accommodate population and business expansion in an orderly, efficient, and environmentally sound manner.
- 6. *Transportation:*** A well-maintained, multi-modal transportation system facilitates the safe, convenient, affordable, and efficient movement of people, goods, and services within and between population and business centers.
- 7. *Housing:*** A range of housing densities, types, and sizes provide residential options for citizens of all ages and incomes.
- 8. *Economic Development:*** Promotes employment opportunities for all income levels within the capacity of the State’s natural resources, public services, and public facilities is encouraged.
- 9. *Environmental Protection:*** Land and water resources are carefully managed to restore and maintain healthy air and water, natural systems, and living resources.
- 10. *Resource Conservation:*** Conserve waterways, forests, agricultural areas, open space, natural systems, and scenic areas.
- 11. *Stewardship:*** Ensure government, businesses, and residents collaborate to create sustainable communities to balance efficient growth with resource protection.
- 12. *Implementation:*** Strategies, policies, programs and funding for growth and development, resource conservation, infrastructure, and transportation are integrated across the local, regional, State, and interstate levels to achieve these visions.



## LAND USE ARTICLE

The Land Use Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland is the Planning and Zoning enabling legislation from which the Town of Oakland derives its powers to regulate land use. Section 3.05 of the Article sets forth the minimum requirements for a Comprehensive Plan, which shall include, among other things:

- A statement of goals and objectives, principles, policies, and standards
- Area of Critical State Concern
- Land Use
- Natural Resources (Sensitive Areas, Fisheries)
- Housing
- Transportation
- Community Facilities
- Mineral Resources
- Water Resources
- Development Regulations
- Development Capacity Analysis (Municipal Growth)
- Implementation

## NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION & SMART GROWTH AREAS ACT OF 1997

In 1997, the Maryland General Assembly passed the Neighborhood Conservation and Smart Growth Areas Act, commonly known as Smart Growth. This legislation aims to direct the State's financial resources toward supporting growth in established communities while limiting development in agricultural and resource conservation areas. At the core of Smart Growth are "Priority Funding Areas" (PFAs), which identify local growth areas eligible for targeted State funding. PFAs include municipalities, rural villages, communities, industrial areas, and planned growth zones served or anticipated to be served by public water and sewer systems.

The State's "Visions" align the Planning and Zoning Enabling Act with Smart Growth by requiring adequate public infrastructure as a prerequisite for State funding. Comprehensive Plans must identify designated "Growth Areas," including those intended for municipal annexation. Land within local growth boundaries can be designated as a PFA if sewer service is planned within a 10-year Water and Sewerage Plan. Such designation must also demonstrate efficient use of land and public infrastructure.

# THE MARYLAND ECONOMIC GROWTH, RESOURCE PROTECTION, AND PLANNING ACT OF 1992

The Maryland Economic Growth, Resource Protection, and Planning Act of 1992 introduced the requirement for a “Sensitive Areas Element” in Comprehensive Plans. This element outlines how a jurisdiction will protect the following:

- Streams and stream buffers
- 100-year floodplains
- Endangered species habitats
- Nontidal wetlands
- Steep slopes
- Other sensitive areas identified by the jurisdiction for protection against the adverse impacts of development

Additionally, Maryland has established procedures to ensure that public infrastructure improvements align with growth policies set forth in the law. The Land Use Article mandates that local governments cannot approve construction projects involving State funds, grants, loans, loan guarantees, or insurance unless the project aligns with the State’s Visions. This Comprehensive Plan has been developed to adhere to the State’s Twelve Visions.

The Land Use Article also requires coordination between county and municipal plans. In 2013, the General Assembly passed SB 671 and HB 409 (§1-416), mandating that Comprehensive Plans be updated every ten years. Furthermore, municipalities must provide a status report on plan implementation at least once every five years.

## HOUSE BILL 1141

In 2006, the Maryland State Legislature enacted House Bill 1141 (HB 1141), introducing significant amendments to the Planning and Zoning Enabling Act (now the Land Use Article) and the Municipal Annexation Act. These amendments required local Comprehensive Plans to include two new elements: the “Water Resources Element” and the “Municipal Growth Element.”

HB 1141 also established additional substantive and procedural requirements for municipalities preparing Comprehensive Plans. These included enhanced intergovernmental coordination to ensure effective land use and growth management planning. State agencies, including the Maryland Departments of the Environment, Natural Resources, and Planning, review and evaluate the information developed under HB 1141’s provisions.

## HB 1045 (2020)

Title 3, Subtitle 1 (Non-Charter Counties and Municipalities) of the Land Use Article outlines the required elements for Comprehensive Plans in Maryland jurisdictions. In 2019, House Bill 1045 (HB 1045) amended Section 3-102 of the Land Use Article by adding Section 3-114, which mandates the inclusion of a housing element in Comprehensive Plans.

This housing element must establish goals, objectives, policies, plans, standards, and strategies to address housing needs, including affordable housing for workforce and low-income populations. To meet this requirement, Oakland must include a housing element that specifically addresses these needs within its jurisdiction. HB 1045 also requires that housing elements utilize the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Area Median Income (AMI) calculations when planning for workforce and low-income housing.

## HB 90 (2021)

Beginning January 1, 2023, House Bill 90 (HB 90) mandates that all housing plans for Towns and non-charter counties actively promote fairness in housing. HB 90 defines "affirmatively furthering fair housing" as taking concrete actions to achieve the following goals:

- Eliminating patterns of housing segregation
- Creating inclusive communities without barriers that limit housing access based on protected characteristics
- Addressing significant disparities in housing needs and access to opportunities
- Replacing segregated living patterns with truly integrated and balanced living environments
- Ensuring compliance with civil rights and fair housing laws

The law does not prescribe specific actions but allows local jurisdictions to develop their own strategies to advance fair housing, provided these strategies include meaningful efforts to address the issues outlined above.

HB 90 also adds provisions to Section 3-114 of the Land Use Article, specifically for municipalities and non-charter counties. These provisions require that:

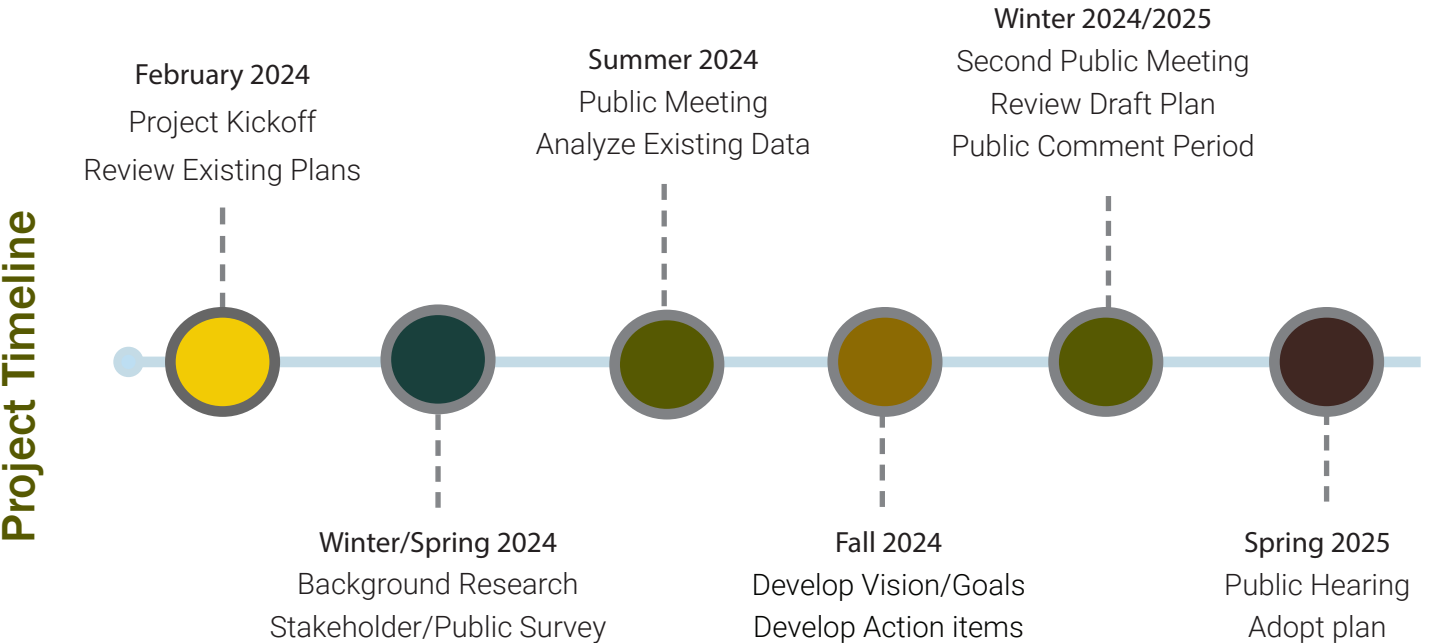
1. Local jurisdictions actively promote fair housing through their housing and urban development programs.
2. Any comprehensive housing plan enacted or amended after January 1, 2023, must include an evaluation of fair housing to ensure the jurisdiction is effectively promoting fairness in housing.

# THE PLANNING PROCESS

Town staff, elected and appointed officials, community stakeholders, and the public worked together to update the Comprehensive Plan with assistance from Mackin Engineering & Consultants. This process involved conducting background research, mapping, and analyzing demographic trends.

Community outreach began by identifying key stakeholders, followed by an online survey and a public input session to gather initial feedback. The consultant team collaborated with the Steering Committee to define the plan’s primary focus areas, goals, and recommendations. Action items for each focus area were developed and presented at a public open house, allowing residents to provide further input.

The planning process concluded with a public review of the plan, a public hearing, and the formal adoption of the plan.





# PUBLIC & STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH

In addition to regular meetings with the Town's Planning Commission and staff, the planning process included a variety of outreach methods designed to publicize the plan, generate excitement and get people involved in determining what the future of Oakland should look like.

## SURVEY

An initial online survey was conducted early in the planning process to collect feedback on key local priorities from the public. The survey garnered 479 responses, with participants highlighting community safety, the street department, faith-based organizations, culture/history/art, and community events as the Town's greatest strengths. On the other hand, the survey identified several areas for improvement, including the availability of shopping/retail, public transportation, housing options and quality, employment opportunities, and housing costs.

## STAKEHOLDERS

The Steering Committee compiled a list of stakeholders who could offer valuable insights and perspectives on the plan. These individuals included representatives from various agencies and organizations, as well as long-standing business owners and community leaders. The primary objective of gathering stakeholder input was to help the Town of Oakland better understand and prioritize local issues, while developing practical, well-informed strategies to address them.

## PUBLIC MEETINGS

In June 2024, a Comprehensive Plan event was held at the Oakland Fire Department to actively involve the community in the planning process. The public input session began with a brief presentation and provided an opportunity for residents to engage directly with consultant staff, sharing their vision for the future, identifying opportunities, and highlighting key issues requiring attention.

A second public input session followed in January 2025, after the development of recommendations for the plan. During this session, participants were given a set amount of "money" to allocate toward the action items they prioritized most, along with the opportunity to share additional feedback through an exit survey. The combined results from the meeting and survey revealed strong community support for the recommendations, reflecting an overall positive reception.

***\*The highest-ranked recommendations are highlighted throughout the document, accompanied by a priority icon next to each action item that ranked high at the public input session.\****

# PREVIOUS STUDIES & REGIONAL PLANS

Previous studies were reviewed and examined as part of the planning process to identify any relevant recommendations or data that could be incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan update. This review helped ensure that past findings and insights were considered, allowing for a more informed and strategic approach to planning.

## OAKLAND COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2009

The 2002 Comprehensive Plan for Oakland, amended in 2009, was reviewed to determine if any recommendations should be incorporated into the current update. This plan aimed to enhance Oakland's residential market, enforce building codes—particularly for rental properties—identify zoning changes to improve neighborhood conditions, and enhance the appearance of major corridors. By examining these prior recommendations, the current planning process seeks to integrate relevant strategies to address ongoing community needs and promote sustainable development.

## OAKLAND ZONING ORDINANCE 2002

The Oakland Zoning Ordinance was first enacted on June 3, 1974, with the most recent version adopted on December 2, 2002. As part of the planning process, the ordinance was reviewed to ensure alignment with current development goals. The County Planning & Land Management staff oversees its administration, conducting final reviews and approvals for all required zoning permits.

## ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DISTRICT MANAGEMENT ACTION PLAN 2017

The Arts and Entertainment District Management Action Plan for Oakland, Maryland, was reviewed to identify key recommendations relevant to this planning process. The plan aims to revitalize the early 20th-century arts scene for which the Town was renowned by developing and promoting new experiences and opportunities for artists and arts organizations. Highlights include the establishment of at least one Arts and Entertainment District featuring venues for local food, crafts, and restaurants, as well as the promotion of tax-related incentives to attract creative enterprises. The plan also emphasizes the importance of community involvement, tourism, and economic revitalization through the arts.

## GARRETT COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2022

The Garrett County 2022 Comprehensive Plan was reviewed to ensure consistency with the Oakland update. This plan articulates the County's 20-year vision and outlines the necessary steps to achieve it, serving as a policy guide for future growth, infrastructure development, and resource management. The plan comprises three main chapters:

- **Sustainable Environment:** Focuses on promoting sustainability through land use policies that conserve natural areas, protect water resources, and manage agricultural and forestry assets, all while fostering a diverse economy.
- **Vibrant Economy:** Addresses economic conditions and goals, emphasizing the importance of infrastructure, transportation, and the management of resource-based industries. It also highlights growth management in the Deep Creek Lake area as vital to economic vitality.
- **Thriving Population:** Plans for quality housing and community services aligned with land use strategies and growth projections, essential for maintaining a thriving population.

## BROADFORD LAKE REVENUESHED 2023

The 2023 Broadford Lake Revenueshed Preliminary Report was reviewed, highlighting key considerations for funding water quality improvement projects. The report emphasizes the need to identify stakeholders benefiting from a healthy watershed, expanding potential funding opportunities beyond traditional sources. It outlines critical questions to address and topics for further investigation to develop effective financing strategies tailored to Broadford Lake's unique characteristics. This approach aims to foster collaboration among state and local governments, as well as other stakeholders, to enhance the lake's water quality and overall environmental health.

## GARRETT COUNTY LAND PRESERVATION, PARKS, AND RECREATION PLAN 2022

The Garrett County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan (LPPRP) 2022 serves as a guide for the County's management and enhancement of recreational, agricultural, and natural resources over the next five years. Key highlights of the plan include:

- **Resource Inventory and Assessment:** Provides a comprehensive inventory and assessment of Garrett County's recreational facilities, agricultural lands, and natural resources. This evaluation helps in understanding current assets and identifying areas for improvement.
- **Alignment with State and Local Goals:** Examines how existing programs and policies contribute to achieving both state and local objectives for resource preservation and enhancement. It emphasizes the importance of cohesive strategies between different levels of governance.
- **Actionable Recommendations:** To expedite progress toward established goals, the LPPRP offers specific actions for Garrett County and the State of Maryland. These recommendations are designed to enhance the effectiveness of resource management and recreational planning.

# PLAN OBJECTIVES

Goals for each plan element were formulated, drawing insights from both the prior Comprehensive Plan of Oakland and input gathered from the Town. These goals served as the foundation for crafting actions outlined in the Implementation Plan.



**Economic Development:** Oakland aims to foster a robust and diverse economy that attracts and nurtures businesses of all sizes.



**Sensitive Areas:** Oakland will safeguard natural resources and environmentally sensitive areas by guiding development and redevelopment with thoughtful consideration.



**Water Resources:** Oakland will ensure that residents have access to clean, reliable water sources.



**Housing:** Oakland will promote inclusive housing types that ensure equality and fairness for all current and future residents that encourages a diverse range of housing opportunities to provide residential options that meet the needs of citizens of all ages and incomes.



**Transportation:** Oakland will advocate for a transportation system that ensures safe, efficient mobility for all users, while also enhancing existing roads, connectivity, and pedestrian and bicycle safety.



**Community Facilities & Services:** Oakland is committed to developing and protecting its community assets, enhancing public facilities, preserving historic resources, and expanding infrastructure to meet the Town's present and future needs.



**Mineral Resources:** Oakland will ensure that any future mineral extraction activities do not diminish residents' quality of life and fully comply with all state regulations.





**Land Use:** Oakland aims to pursue a development pattern that safeguards its assets while fostering a balance among diverse land uses, creating an inviting destination.



**Development Regulations:** Oakland will revise its land use regulations to align with the goals outlined in the Comprehensive Plan Update and make the Zoning Ordinance more user-friendly including tables and easy to understand language.



**Development Capacity Analysis:** Oakland will continue to monitor and secure the availability of land for future development or redevelopment.



**Municipal Growth:** Oakland will oversee future development and redevelopment to mitigate significant impacts on the Town's historic and cultural presence, ensuring preservation of these resources.



**Areas of Critical State Concern:** Oakland will guarantee the protection of areas designated as critical state concern within its boundaries, preventing them from being subject to development.

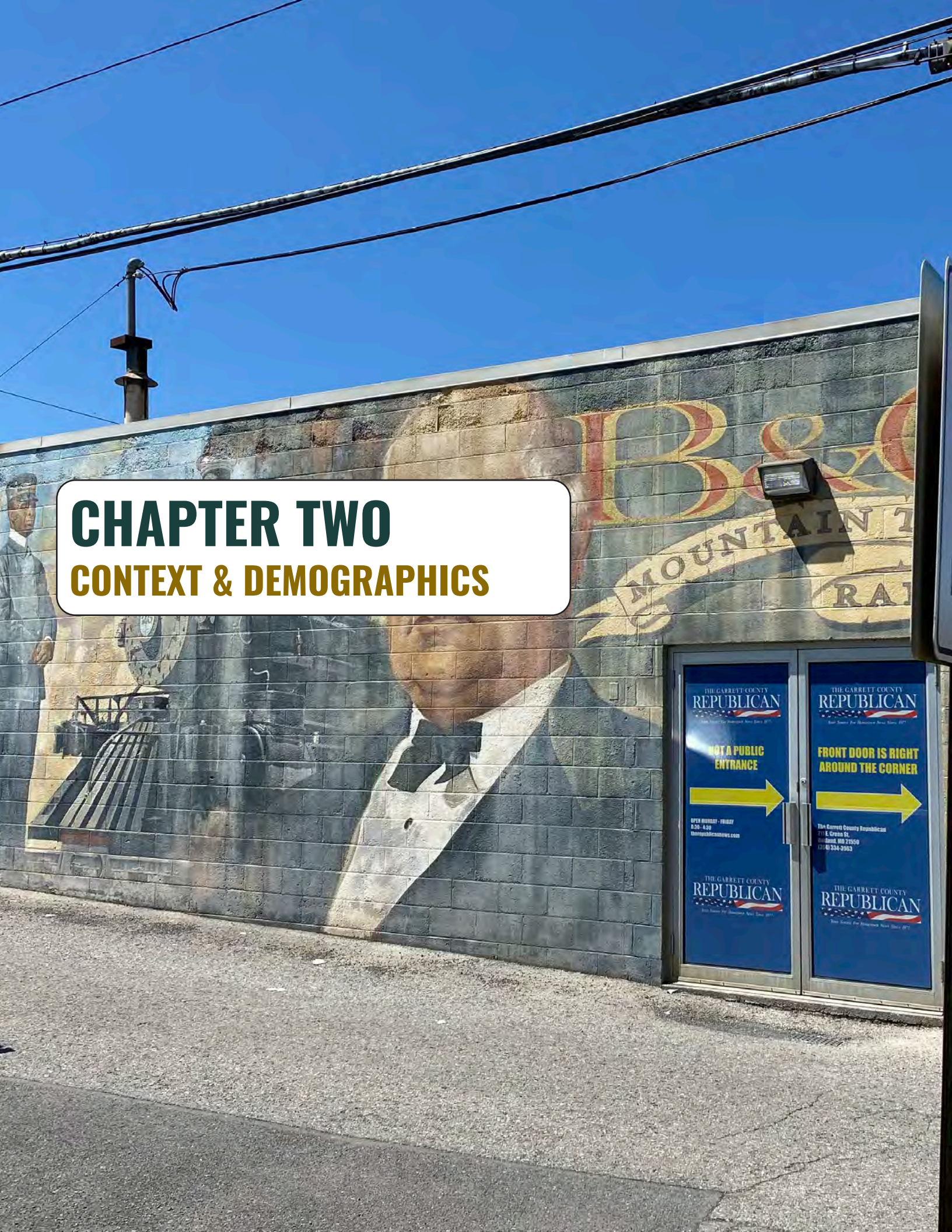


**Implementation:** Oakland is committed to ensuring that land development regulations and the review process for development applications are streamlined and supportive, encouraging development in suitable areas.



# CHAPTER TWO

## CONTEXT & DEMOGRAPHICS





# DEMOGRAPHIC SNAPSHOT

Oakland, Maryland, is a small Town with a population that reflects a blend of history and rural charm. As of the 2020 Decennial Census and 2023 American Community Survey estimates, Oakland's population primarily consists of older adults, with a median age higher than the national average, highlighting its appeal as a quiet, retirement-friendly community.

According to the United States Census Bureau, the population of the Town of Oakland in 2023 was estimated to be 2,043 people. This represents a 6% increase from 2010 when the population was 1,925.

## SUMMARY



**Population: 2,043**



**Land Area: 2.60 sq. miles**



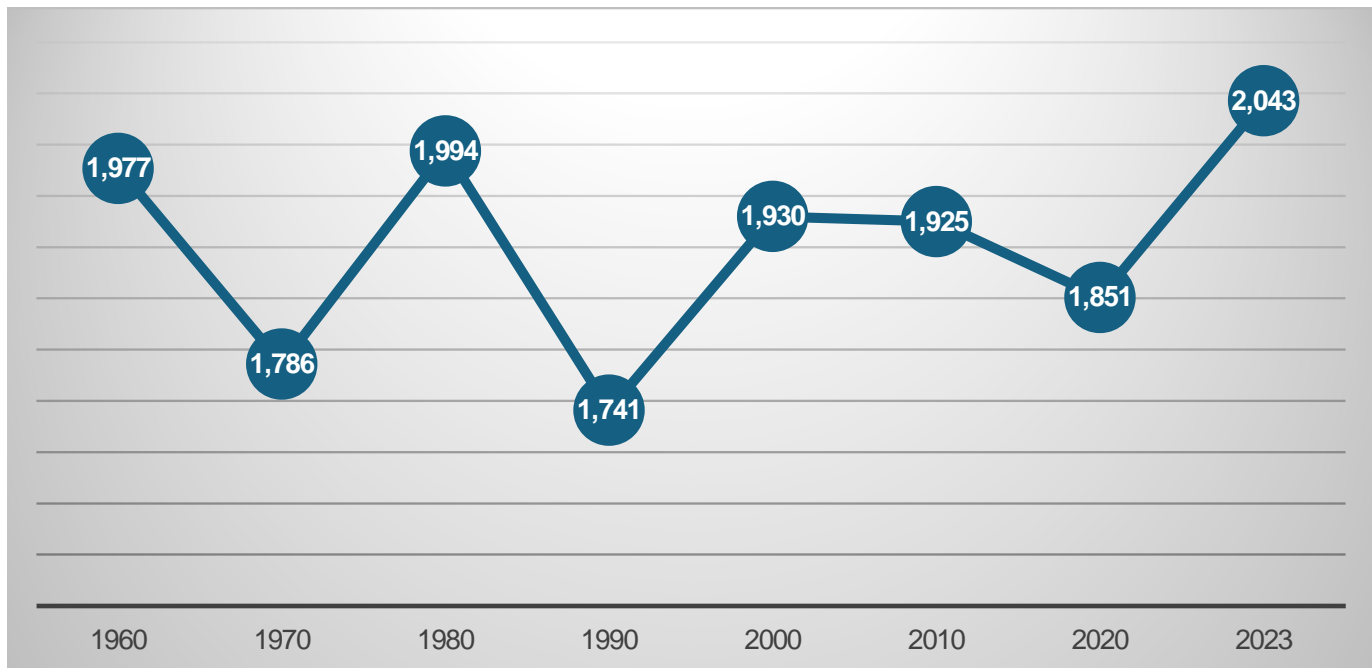
**Households: 973**



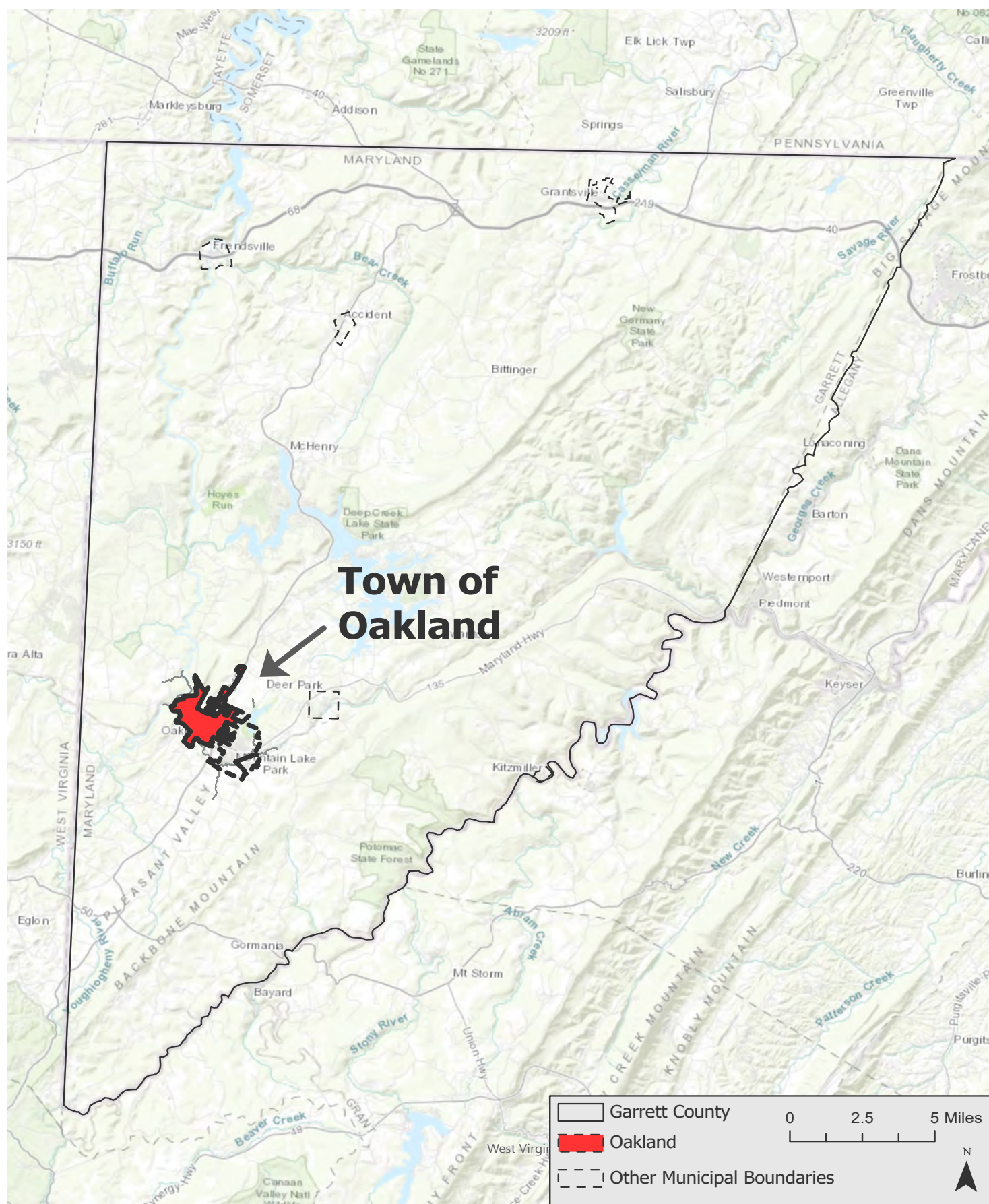
**Median Household Income: \$59,904**

## TOWN POPULATION

Oakland's population fluctuated between 1960 and 2000, experiencing periods of both growth and decline. Following 2000, the Town saw a steady decline in population, but recent trends have reversed, with the 2023 estimate marking its highest population to date. This resurgence highlights renewed interest and investment in the community.



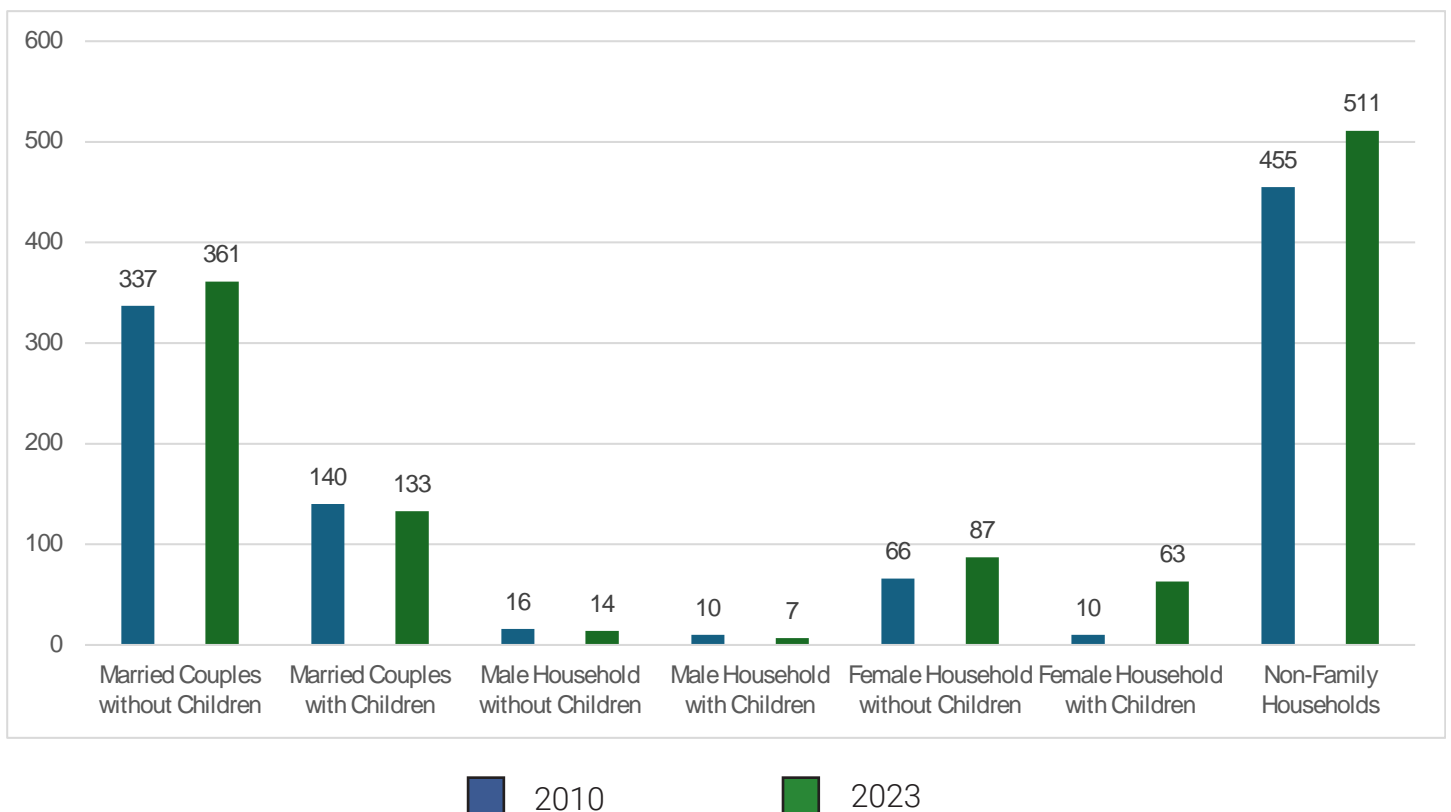
Map 1: Reference Map





## HOUSEHOLD TYPE

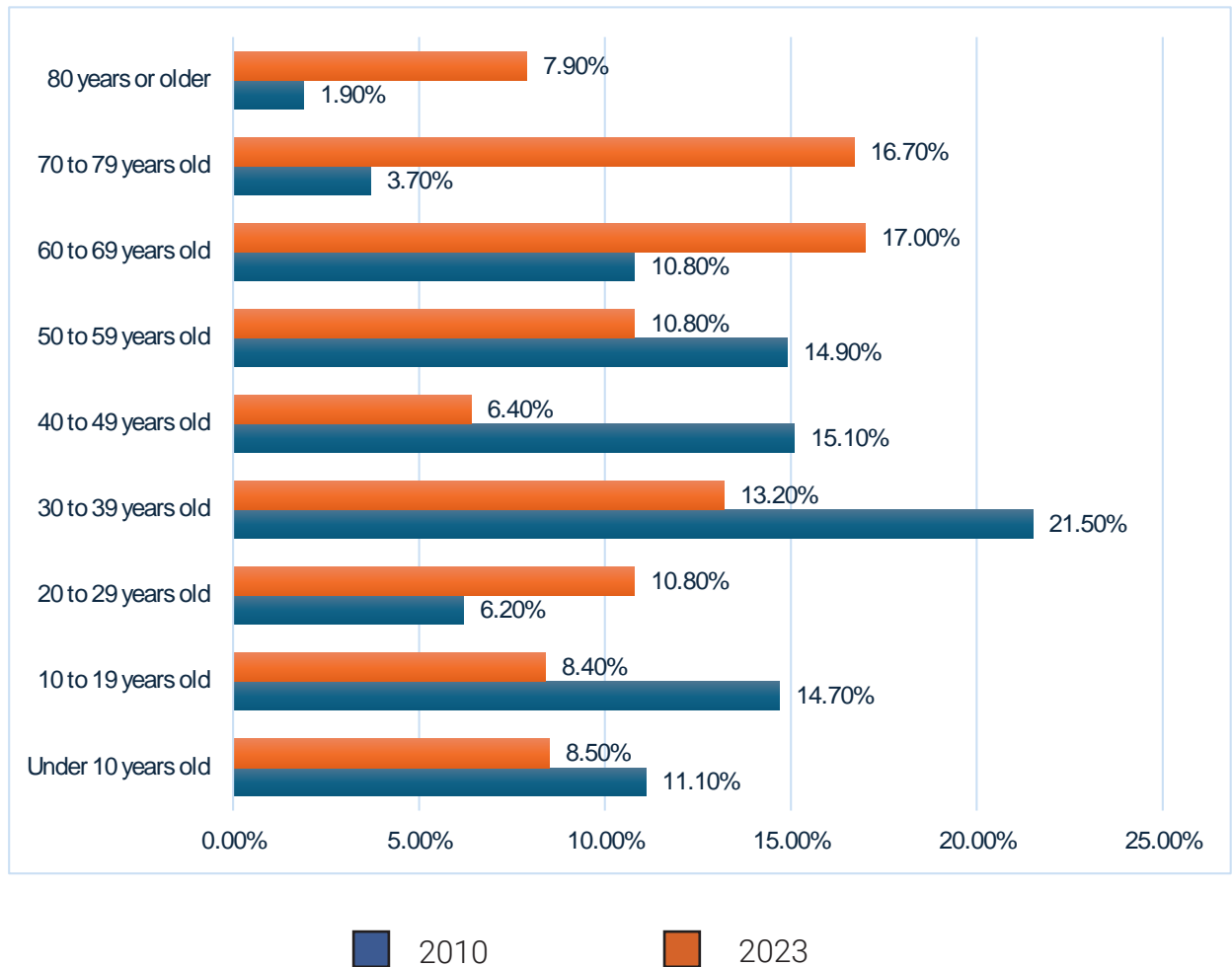
Over the past decade, household populations in Oakland have shifted, resulting in notable changes in household types. While some categories, such as married couples without children and female-headed households (with and without children), have increased, others, like married couples with children and male-headed households (with and without children), have declined. **Notably, non-family households, encompassing non-related individuals cohabiting and those living alone, increased by 56 households.**



# AGE

Over the past decade, Oakland has experienced notable shifts in its age distribution, particularly across nine-year age groups. The most significant increase occurred in the 70 to 79 age group, which grew by 13%, while the 30 to 39 age group saw a decline of 8.3%.

Additionally, Oakland’s median age rose significantly from 40.1 in 2010 to 51.2 in 2023, **reflecting a clear trend toward an aging population.**

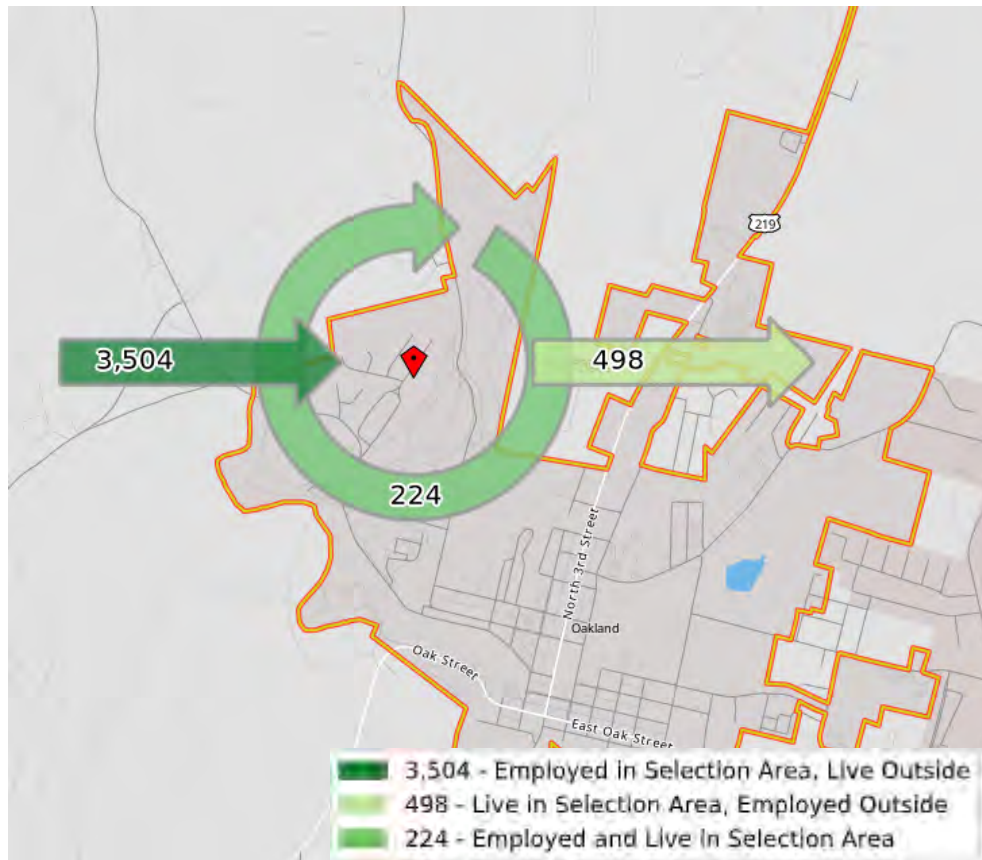


# EMPLOYMENT

The diagram below illustrates the daily commuting patterns of individuals in and around Oakland. It shows that 3,054 people work in Oakland but live outside the Town, while 498 residents of Oakland commute to work elsewhere. A smaller group of 224 individuals both live and work within the Town.

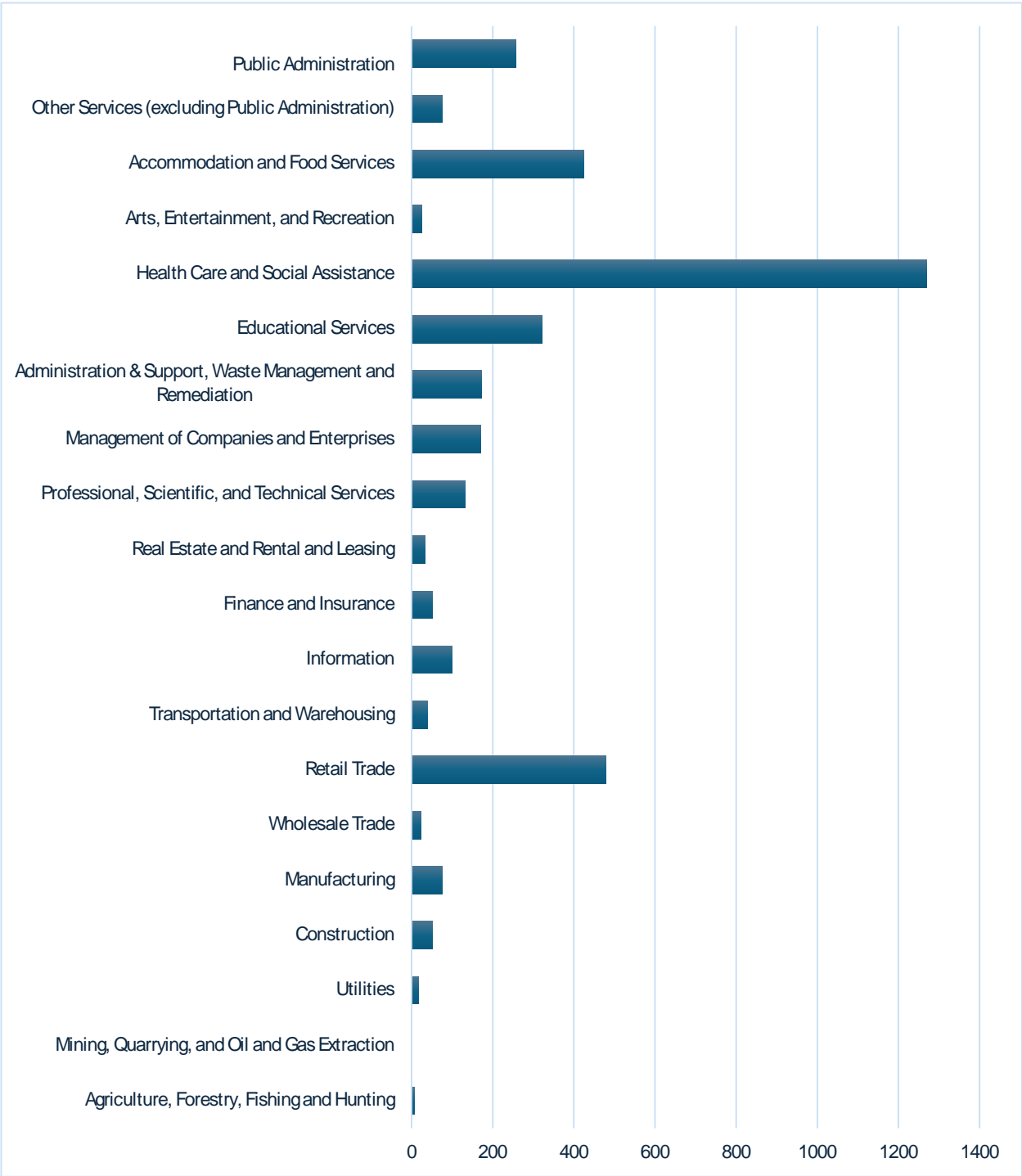
The census estimates that Oakland employed **3,728 people in 2022, which about half of those people had earnings less than \$40,000/year.**

Regarding education, 90.7% of Oakland residents aged 25 and older have at least a high school diploma, and 25.8% hold a bachelor's degree or higher. These figures are similar to those for Garrett County, where 89.3% have a high school diploma and 24.6% hold a bachelor's degree or higher.



# INDUSTRY

The employment industries in Oakland showed a diverse range of sectors. According to the 2023 Census Estimates, of the 3,728 employed individuals, the largest group worked in Health Care and Social Assistance (34.1%). Other significant industries included Retail Trade (12.8%), Accommodation and Food Services (11.4%), Educational Services (8.7%), and Public Administration (6.0%).

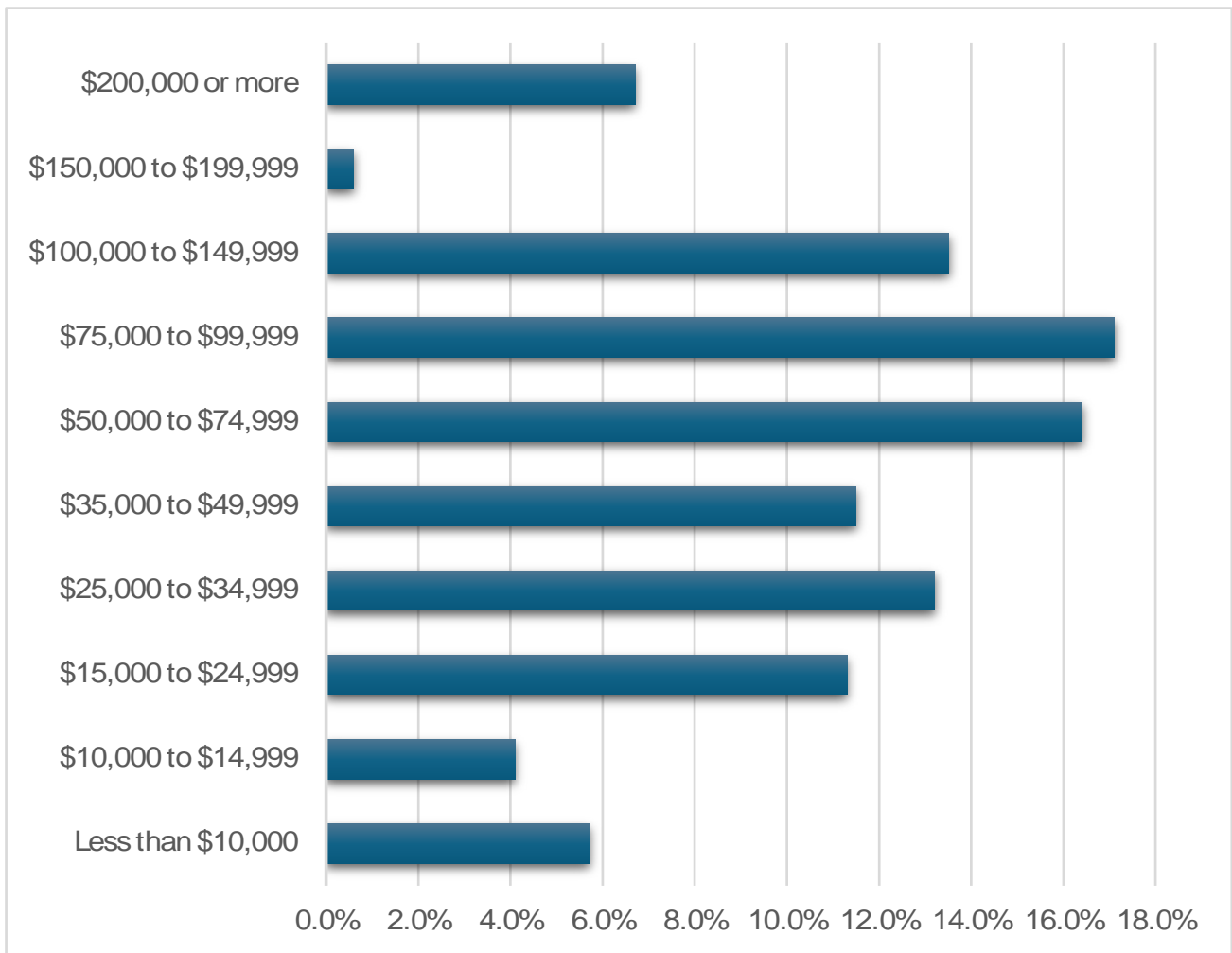




# INCOME

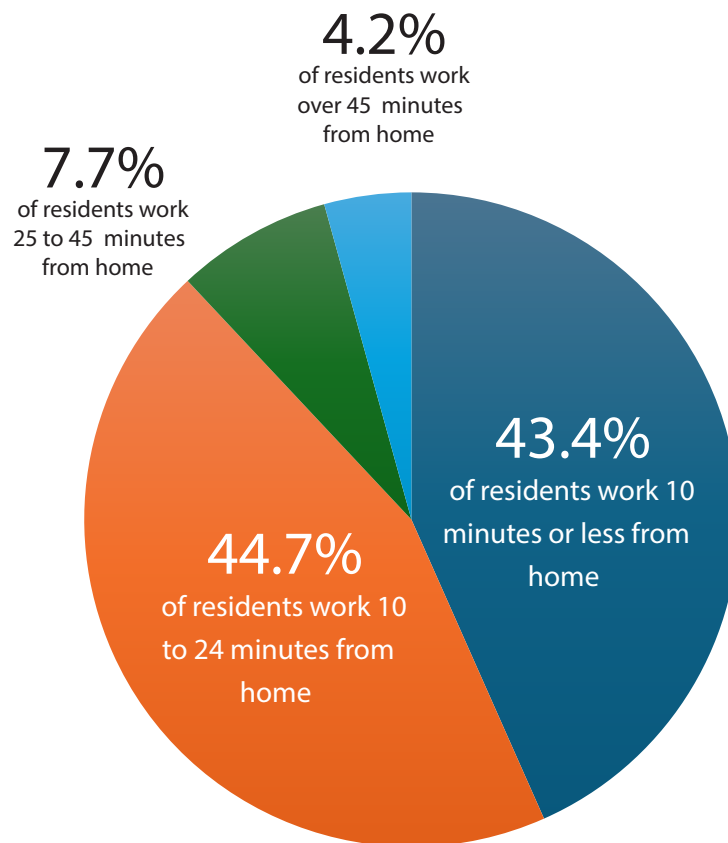
The majority of household incomes (33.5%) in Oakland fall between \$50,000 to \$99,999 per year. An additional 34.3% of households made less than \$35,000 and 20.8% make more than \$100,000.

The median income across Oakland households was \$59,904 in 2023, **which is much lower than the Garrett County's median of \$69,031.**



## COMMUTE

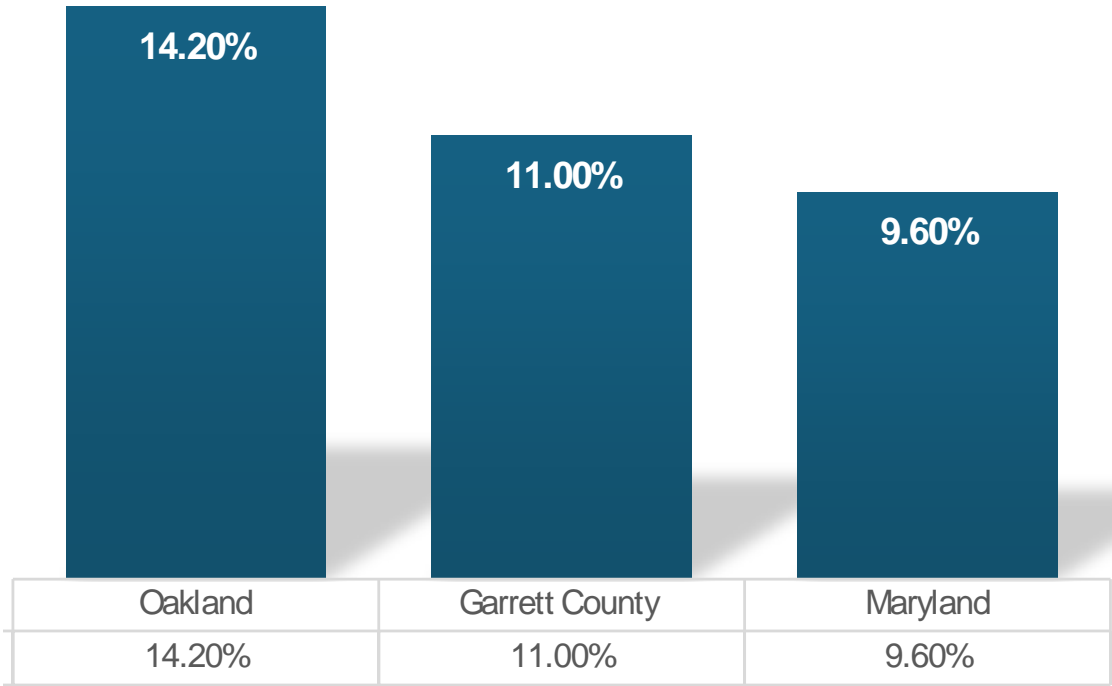
Oakland workers primarily find employment close to the Town (**88.1% travel less than 25 minutes from home**), though many commute to various destinations throughout the region. Other common areas of employment for Oakland workers include Mountain Lake Park, Terra Alta, Deep Creek, and Cumberland.



# POVERTY

Poverty levels have experienced a slight decrease of 1.5% over the past decade, declining from 15.7% in 2010 to 14.2% in 2023.

Census data reveals that when comparing Oakland’s poverty rates, the Town stands **higher than Garrett County (11%) and in Maryland (9.6%).**



# HOUSING UNITS

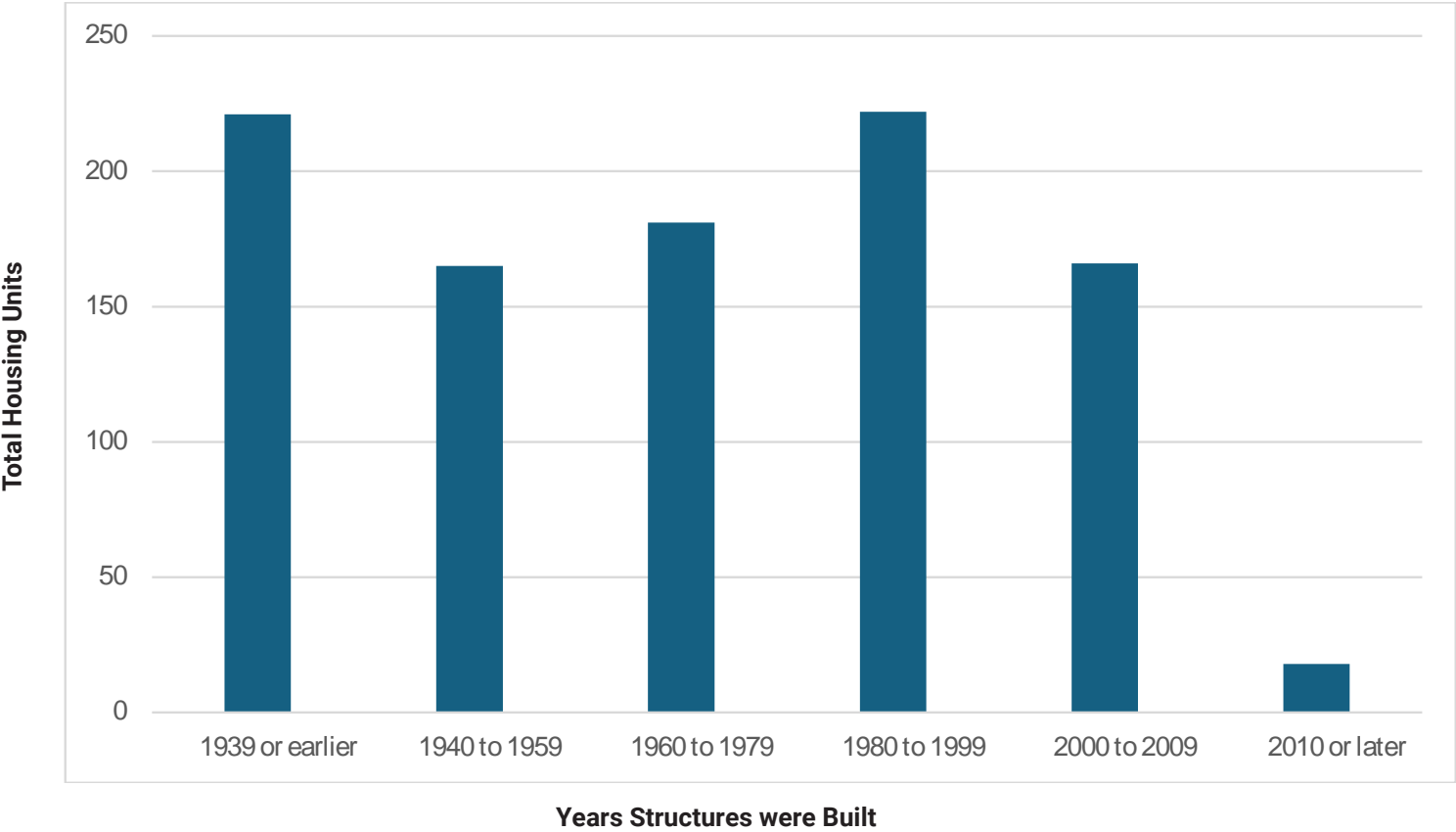
The Census Bureau reported 1,001 housing units in Oakland in 2020, down from 1,009 in 2010, representing a net loss of 8 homes. This figure accounts for new units in both single-family and multi-unit configurations, minus any units lost due to demolition, abandonment, or conversion.

As shown in the graph below, the housing construction in Oakland peaked in 1939 and earlier, followed by a gradual decline. This trend leveled off between 1980 and 1999, during which time many new housing options were developed, but the decline has continued into the present day.



Oakland’s homes are  
**50.9%** renter-occupied.

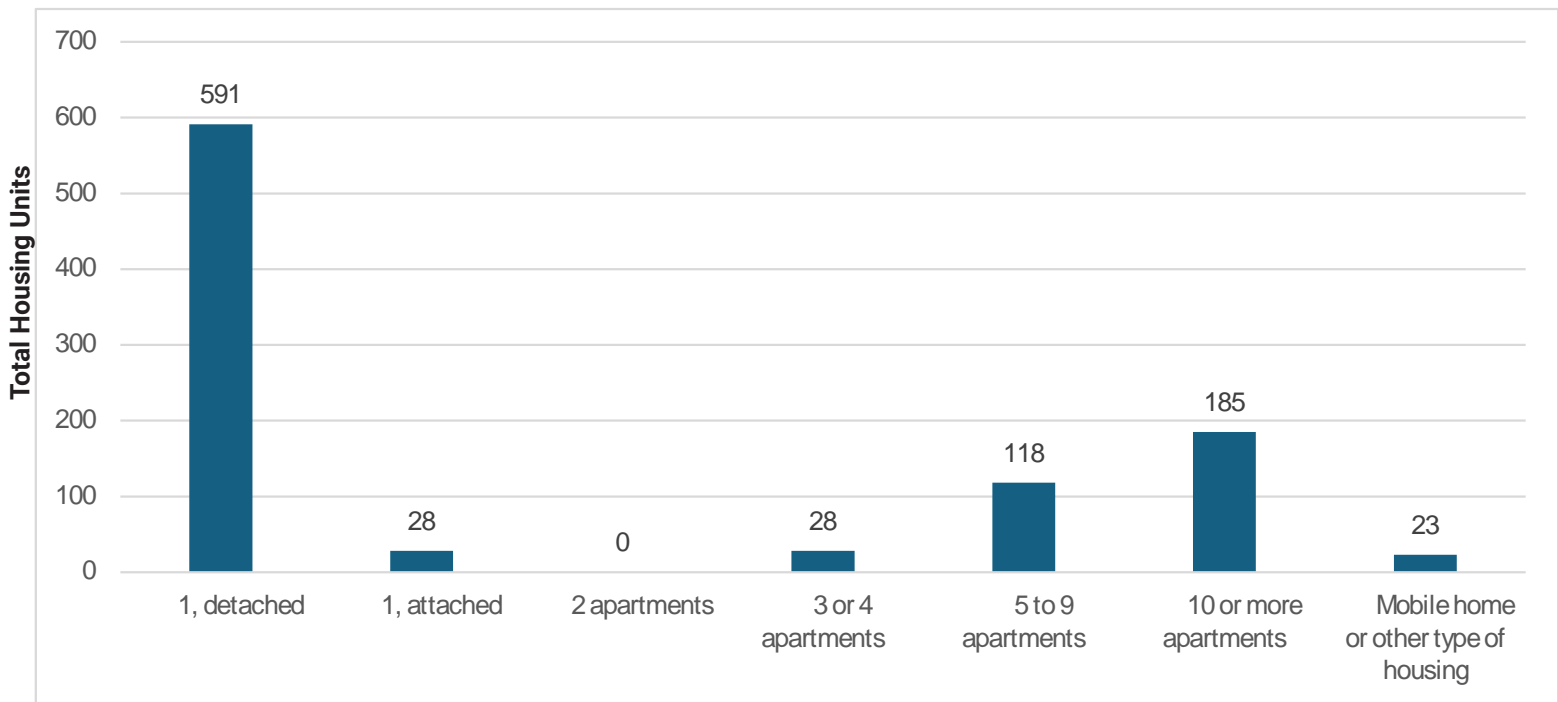
This has increased slightly from 2010, when the rate was approximately 49.2%.



# HOUSING TYPE & OCCUPANCY

Most of the residences in Oakland **consist of single-family detached structures, which comprise 60.7% of the housing stock.** The next prevalent type is ten or more apartment units, accounting for 19% of homes. Other housing categories include structures with various apartments (12.1%), single-family attached and so forth.

**According to the Census, Oakland recorded 178 vacant homes.** Vacancy in this context encompasses homes available for rent, for sale, or those that have been rented or sold but not yet occupied. Other reasons for homes being classified as vacant include seasonal, recreational, occasional use, and the “other” category, which often aligns with abandonment.







# **CHAPTER THREE**

## **LAND USE & ZONING**



# INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

## Land Use, Development Regulations, Municipal Growth, and Development Capacity Analysis)

The Land Use section establishes a policy framework that guides the allocation of land for various purposes within the Town, ensuring alignment with the overall vision, goals, and objectives of this Comprehensive Plan. By designating land for residential, commercial, and other uses, this section provides a structured approach to managing the community's land resources to meet the daily needs of residents. The policies outlined in this chapter aim to foster a sustainable, productive, and cost-effective future while also adhering to the State's Visions for growth and development.

This chapter also examines the existing land-use patterns and how they have evolved to support the changing needs of the community. By analyzing historical trends and current zoning regulations, it provides insight into the factors shaping development and land management decisions. Additionally, it highlights the relationship between land use and broader planning considerations, such as economic development, transportation, and infrastructure.

Additionally, this section explores the integration of zoning, growth tiers, and other considerations in shaping the Town's future. It emphasizes the importance of balancing development with the preservation of natural resources to maintain the Town's character and ecological health. By addressing these key elements, the chapter ensures that land-use policies contribute to a well-planned and resilient community.



## EXISTING LAND USE

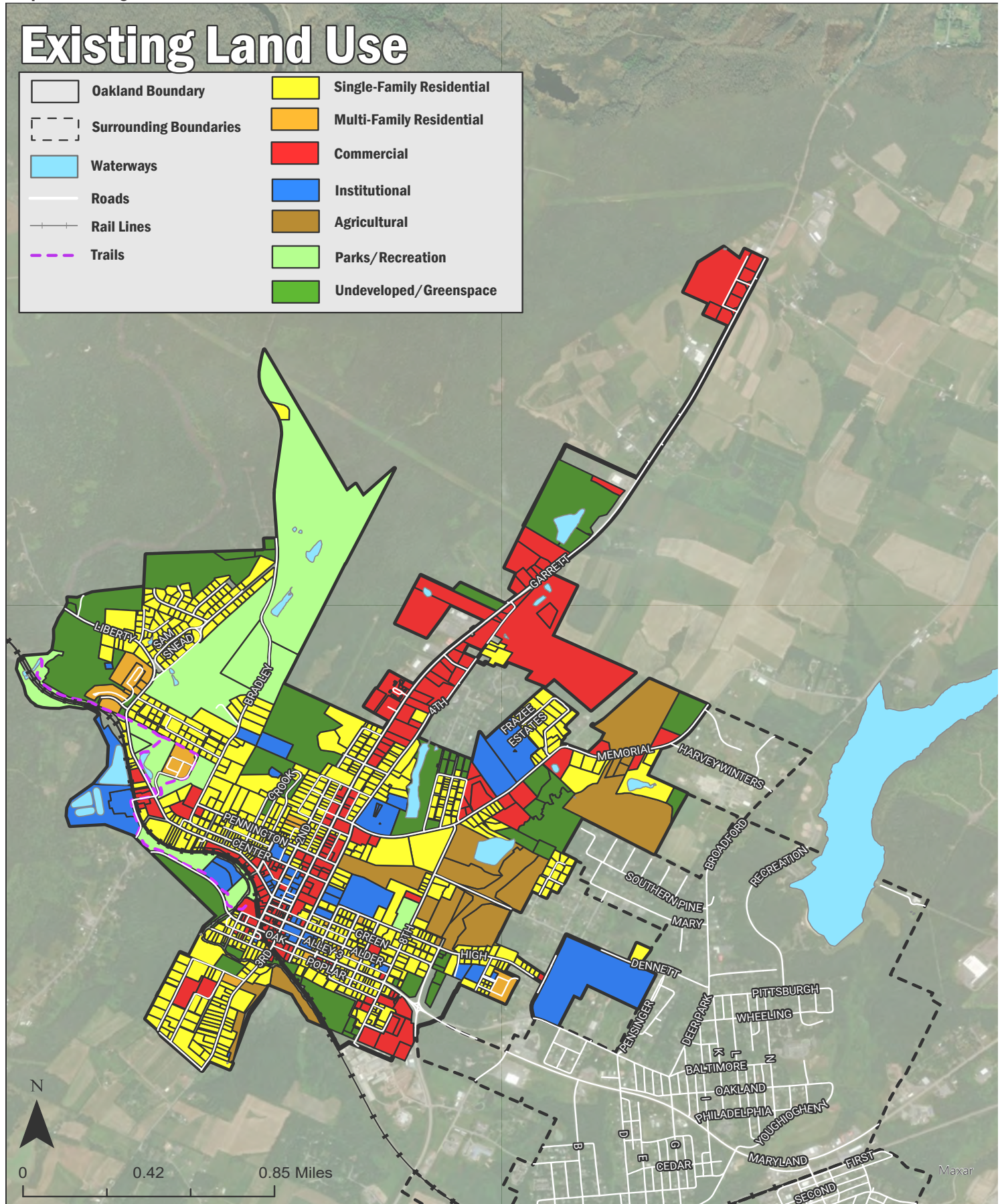
This section begins with an overview of land use in Oakland, highlighting the various land use categories outlined on this page. A detailed map of the current land use is provided on Map 2; however, it's important to note that the land use map may not align directly with the zoning map. The former depicts existing land use patterns, while the latter designates the allowed uses for land.

The existing land use inventory for Oakland was created using land cover data from Garrett County, refined and updated based on field observations and input from the Town staff and the Steering Committee. Below is a breakdown of the land use categories and the percentage of the Town each one covers:

- **Single-family Residential** (28.4%): Includes single-family residential areas.
- **Multi-Family Residential** (2.9%): Includes multi-family (i.e. apartments) residential areas.
- **Commercial** (17.1%): Encompasses commercial areas such as downtown, shopping centers, and businesses.
- **Institutional** (9.2%): Covers civic, governmental, religious, and community sites.
- **Agricultural** (9.9%): Includes areas that are active farms or agricultural related uses.
- **Parks/Recreation** (16%): Designated for recreational uses, including parks, sports facilities, camps, and trails.
- **Undeveloped/Greenspace** (16.5%): Includes intact forests, fragmented stands of woodlands, or vacant land.



Map 2: Existing Land Use



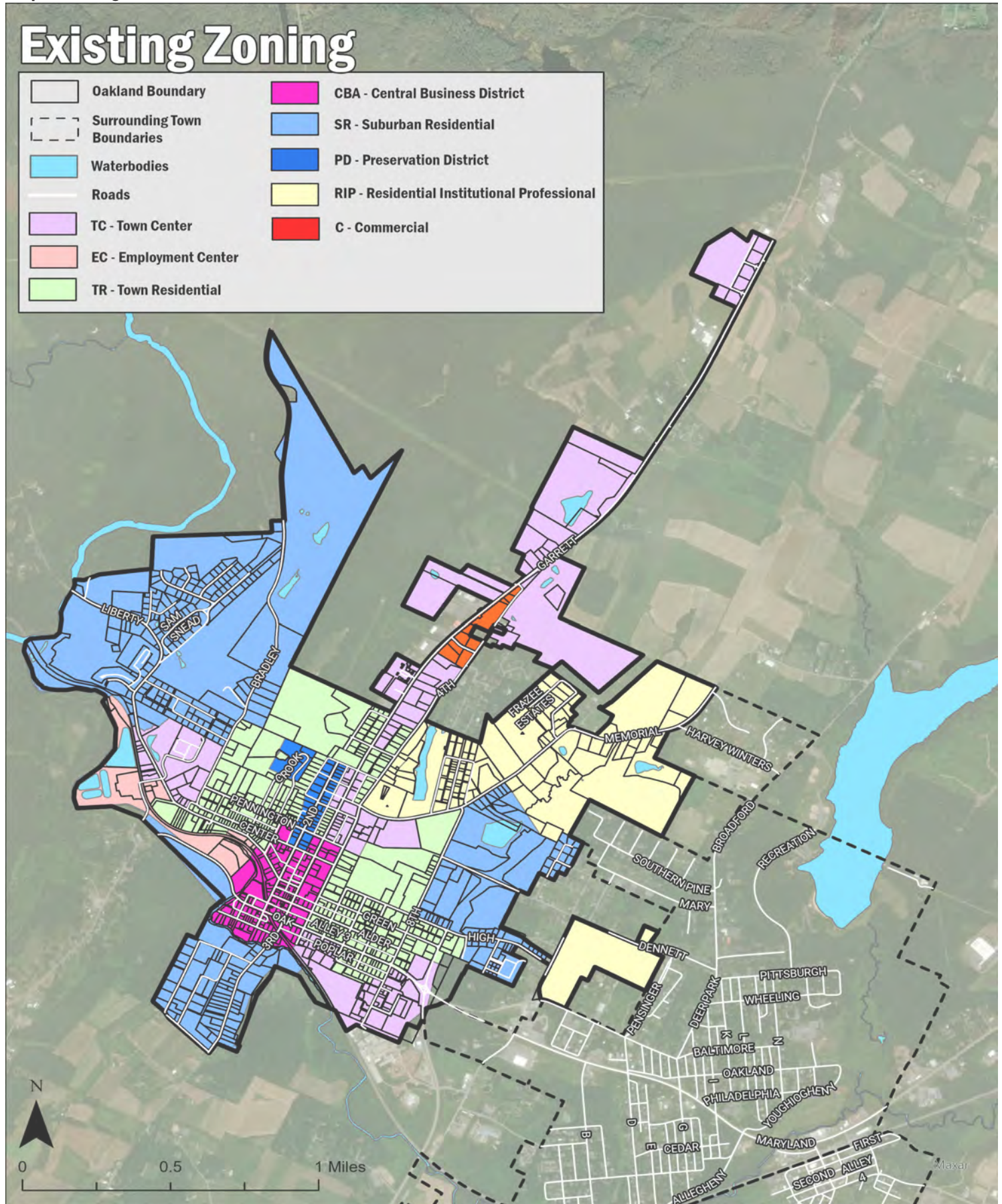
# ZONING

Zoning is a fundamental component of Comprehensive Planning in Maryland, serving as a tool to guide land use, direct development, and promote balanced growth. It establishes clear regulations that define permissible land uses, helping to preserve the character of communities while allowing for future expansion and adaptation. The Town's zoning framework consists of eight distinct districts, which are illustrated on the zoning map on Map 3.

- **TOWN CENTER:** Town Center areas would service individuals and families who desire to be near stores, offices, banks, churches and other nonresidential uses. In summary, the Town center is an urban living environment. The Town Center is also designed for retail, service and office uses complimenting to Oakland's central business area.
- **EMPLOYMENT CENTER:** The Employment Center is the zone designated for industrial and heavy commercial uses. Single-family homes are not permitted.
- **TOWN RESIDENTIAL:** Town Residential areas would contain both older and newer residential portions of Oakland. These areas are intended to preserve and enhance the charm and intimacy of a relatively densely developed residential environment.
- **CENTRAL BUSINESS AREA:** The Central Business Area is designed to provide a high degree of developmental flexibility in which a wide mix of residential and other uses, including single-family dwellings, modular homes, along with shops, service stations, banks and utilities are allowed, but where industrial uses are restricted.
- **SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL:** Suburban Residential areas would provide land for greater open space in the living environment by accommodating lower density single-family residential development. It provides for larger houses and more flexibility in placement of houses on the lots.
- **PRESERVATION DISTRICT:** The Preservation District is designed to preserve the older larger homes. While the Preservation District is very similar to the Town Residential category, future residential development would be limited primarily to single-family residences.
- **RESIDENTIAL INSTITUTIONAL-PROFESSIONAL DISTRICT:** The Residential Institutional-Professional District would contain both suburban-residential-type uses and institutional-professional uses, such as professional offices, medical offices, governmental buildings, and institutional-type buildings, with some limitations.
- **COMMERCIAL ZONING:** Commercial Zoning includes the higher intensity retail and service business uses and some light industrial uses. Single-family homes are not permitted.



Map 3: Zoning



## LAND USE TIER

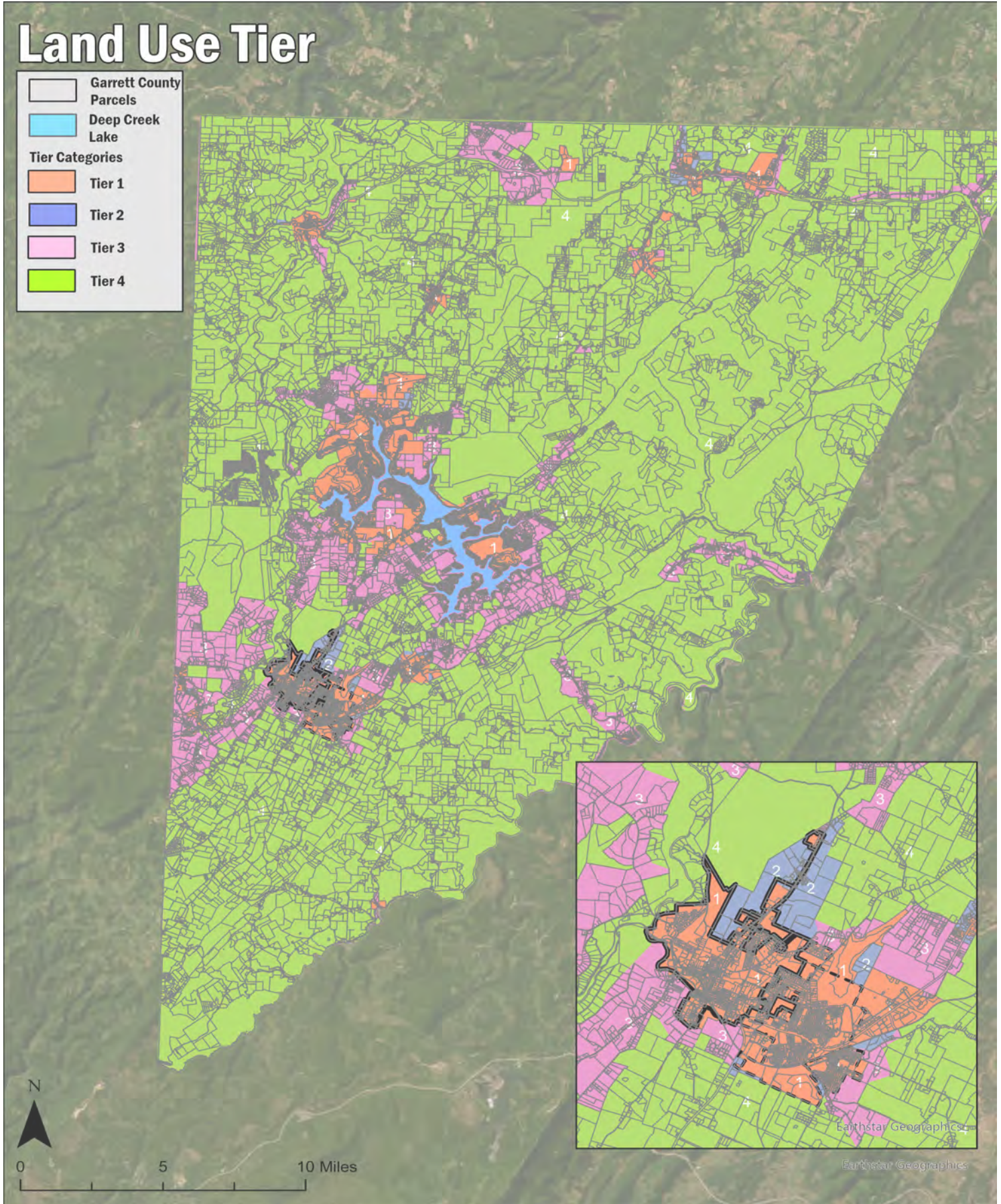
Garrett County initially adopted a growth tier map in December 2012, which was later amended in May 2016 under the Sustainable Growth and Preservation Act. This map serves as a tool for guiding development and managing growth within the county, ensuring that areas are appropriately designated for different levels of development and preservation.

The Town of Oakland has reviewed and agreed with the growth tier map, incorporating it into the update of its Comprehensive Plan. This alignment ensures that Oakland's growth strategies are consistent with the broader county planning efforts, promoting sustainable development and preserving the Town's character.

As depicted on Map 4, Oakland is entirely within the Tier 1 category, which includes areas served by public water systems and designated as local growth areas in the Garrett County Comprehensive Plan. The Town fully supports the tier map as amended in May 2016, reflecting a commitment to responsible growth and development within the designated growth areas.



Map 4: Land Use Tier



# LAND USE PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

## Action

### 1

#### **Identify and evaluate various locations for potential annexation.**

Identifying these areas is an essential part of municipal planning, as it supports strategic growth and development that aligns with both local and State goals. State guidelines require municipalities to assess and prioritize areas for annexation to manage the expansion of services, infrastructure, and community resources in a way that is both sustainable and organized. By identifying suitable annexation areas, Towns can plan for future growth while maintaining the character and quality of life in existing neighborhoods.

For Oakland, prioritizing and selecting annexation areas is an important first step toward fostering a more cohesive community. Annexing these areas will help integrate neighboring properties, improve service delivery, and enhance connectivity. These targeted annexation areas will play a significant role in strengthening the Town's development and supporting a more unified, sustainable future. Currently, areas for targeted annexation near Oakland include closing existing gaps and expanding along Route 219.

#### **The Town should continue to take an active approach to:**

- Prioritize areas that close existing gaps around the Town, such as Mitchell Manor. As a secondary focus, consider areas along the commercial corridor on Route 219.





## Action

# 2 Proactively encourage the redevelopment and reuse of vacant and blighted properties.

Addressing vacant and blighted properties involves a coordinated effort to work with landowners and property developers who own unoccupied or rundown properties to repurpose them effectively. This was a key priority during the planning process, as these sites often detract from community aesthetics, economic vitality, and public safety. The Town should actively encourage the redevelopment and reuse of such properties to enhance the overall character of the area and attract new investment. By identifying strategic opportunities for revitalization, the Town can transform neglected spaces into productive assets that benefit residents and businesses alike.

A coordinated approach is essential to successfully repurpose vacant and blighted properties, requiring strong partnerships with landowners, property developers, and local agencies. The Town should implement policies and incentives that encourage private investment that can help facilitate redevelopment. By fostering a collaborative environment, the Town can create a pathway for sustainable redevelopment, ultimately enhancing property values, increasing tax revenue, and improving the quality of life for residents.

### The Town should continue to take an active approach to:

- Reach out to landowners and developers with these properties to discuss potential redevelopment opportunities.
- Promote incentive programs, such as tax abatements, grants, or low-interest loans, to encourage redevelopment efforts.
- Market available properties to potential developers and investors, highlighting the benefits of redevelopment.
- Utilize and coordinate with County services.



## Action

# 3

## **Prioritize improving current zoning standards to facilitate creative property reuse and future development needs.**

Enhancing zoning standards is essential for promoting creative property reuse and addressing future development needs. This includes developing site design standards that accommodate future zoning requirements, encouraging the redevelopment of non-conforming existing sites, and implementing zoning incentives or density bonuses to attract new development. By updating site design standards to align with evolving zoning requirements, the Town can establish a more flexible framework that supports sustainable growth and revitalization. Facilitating the redevelopment of non-conforming sites helps transform underutilized properties into productive spaces that align with modern land-use goals. Additionally, offering zoning incentives or density bonuses can attract new investment by making projects more economically feasible for developers. A forward-thinking approach to zoning will ensure the community remains adaptable, vibrant, and well-positioned for long-term economic and residential expansion.

### **The Town should continue to take an active approach to:**

- Conduct a comprehensive review of current zoning standards and identify areas that need updating to support creative property reuse and future development needs.
- Create and adopt site design standards that accommodate future zoning needs, focusing on flexibility, sustainability, and community compatibility.
- Establish guidelines and processes to facilitate the redevelopment of non-conforming existing sites, making it easier for property owners to upgrade and repurpose their properties.
- Develop and introduce zoning incentives to encourage property owners and developers to pursue creative property reuse and redevelopment.
- Implement density bonuses and other incentives to attract new development, promoting higher-density projects in suitable areas to maximize land use efficiency.



## Action

## 4

**Review existing zoning regulations that may impede the development of lodging accommodations, while analyzing the advantages and disadvantages of various diverse lodging opportunities.**

Traditional zoning regulations often restrict the establishment of various lodging options, such as boutique hotels, bed-and-breakfasts, and short-term rentals, limiting a community's ability to attract a broader range of visitors. By reassessing these regulations, the Town can identify and amend restrictive provisions, thereby encouraging the development of accommodations that cater to different market segments and enhance the local tourism industry.

Analyzing the advantages and disadvantages of various lodging opportunities is also crucial for informed decision-making. For instance, while short-term rentals like Airbnb offer travelers unique, localized experiences and can provide homeowners with additional income, they have also been associated with rising housing costs for local residents and potential disruptions in residential neighborhoods. Conversely, traditional hotels may contribute more to local tax revenues and job creation but might lack the distinctive charm that some visitors seek. A comprehensive analysis would balance these factors, promoting lodging options that align with economic objectives while preserving neighborhood integrity.

**The Town should continue to take an active approach to:**

- Host public meetings Host public forums to gather input from residents, business owners, and stakeholders on expanding lodging accommodations, including boutique hotels, bed-and-breakfast establishments, and regulated short-term rentals.
- Review best practices and regulations from similar Towns to identify effective strategies for managing various lodging options, ensuring they complement the community's character and meet local needs.

**BMP for Lodging Options**

BMPs for lodging opportunities is vital for small Towns to balance economic benefits with community well-being. Establishing clear regulations that define lodging accommodations, designate permissible zones, and outline operational requirements—such as licensing, safety standards, and health compliance—ensures property owners understand their responsibilities and uphold community standards.

Effective enforcement of these regulations is crucial. Utilizing digital tools and data analytics can aid in monitoring compliance and identifying non-compliant properties. Providing education and support to lodging operators fosters a cooperative relationship between the Town, property owners, and business owners. Engaging with the community through regular feedback helps address concerns like noise, parking, or housing availability, ensuring lodging operations align with the Town's values and quality of life.

**Action****5****Collaborate with Garrett County to enhance code enforcement efforts by establishing clear communication channels, sharing resources, and developing a unified strategy to address code violations effectively.**

Garrett County assists with certain aspects of code enforcement throughout the Town of Oakland, which helps make a coordinated approach essential for maintaining compliance and addressing violations effectively. Strengthening collaboration between the Town and the County can improve the efficiency of enforcement efforts by ensuring that both entities are aligned in their priorities and procedures. Establishing clear communication channels will allow for the timely exchange of information, enabling a more proactive response to code violations. Additionally, regular meetings and reporting structures can help streamline enforcement actions, ensuring that issues such as property maintenance, zoning compliance, and safety regulations are consistently addressed.

To enhance these efforts, Oakland and Garrett County should explore resource-sharing opportunities, such as joint training programs for enforcement personnel, shared access to reporting systems, or even the development of a centralized database to track violations and resolutions. This should also include public outreach initiatives to educate property owners on local regulations and encourage voluntary compliance. By fostering a strong partnership and implementing strategic enforcement measures, the Town can improve community aesthetics, public safety, and overall quality of life for its residents.

**The Town should continue to take an active approach to:**

- Schedule regular meetings with Garrett County officials to discuss shared code enforcement priorities and challenges.
- Launch various campaigns to educate the public about code enforcement standards and the reporting process.
- Identify and track high-priority areas or recurring code violations, such as blighted properties, illegal dumping, or unsafe structures.

# CHAPTER FOUR

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT





# INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

## Business Growth and Economic Development

During the planning process, Oakland recognized economic development and business growth as essential priorities for its future. The Economic Development chapter outlines key focus areas to support business expansion and investment. The Town aims to strengthen its retail, shopping, and dining sectors, foster job creation, and enhance the local economy. As a designated Main Street Maryland community, Oakland benefits from a range of resources designed to revitalize its traditional downtown district. This designation not only improves the visual appeal of the area but also reinforces the Town's economic potential by encouraging business growth and community engagement (see Appendices for additional information about Main Street Designation).

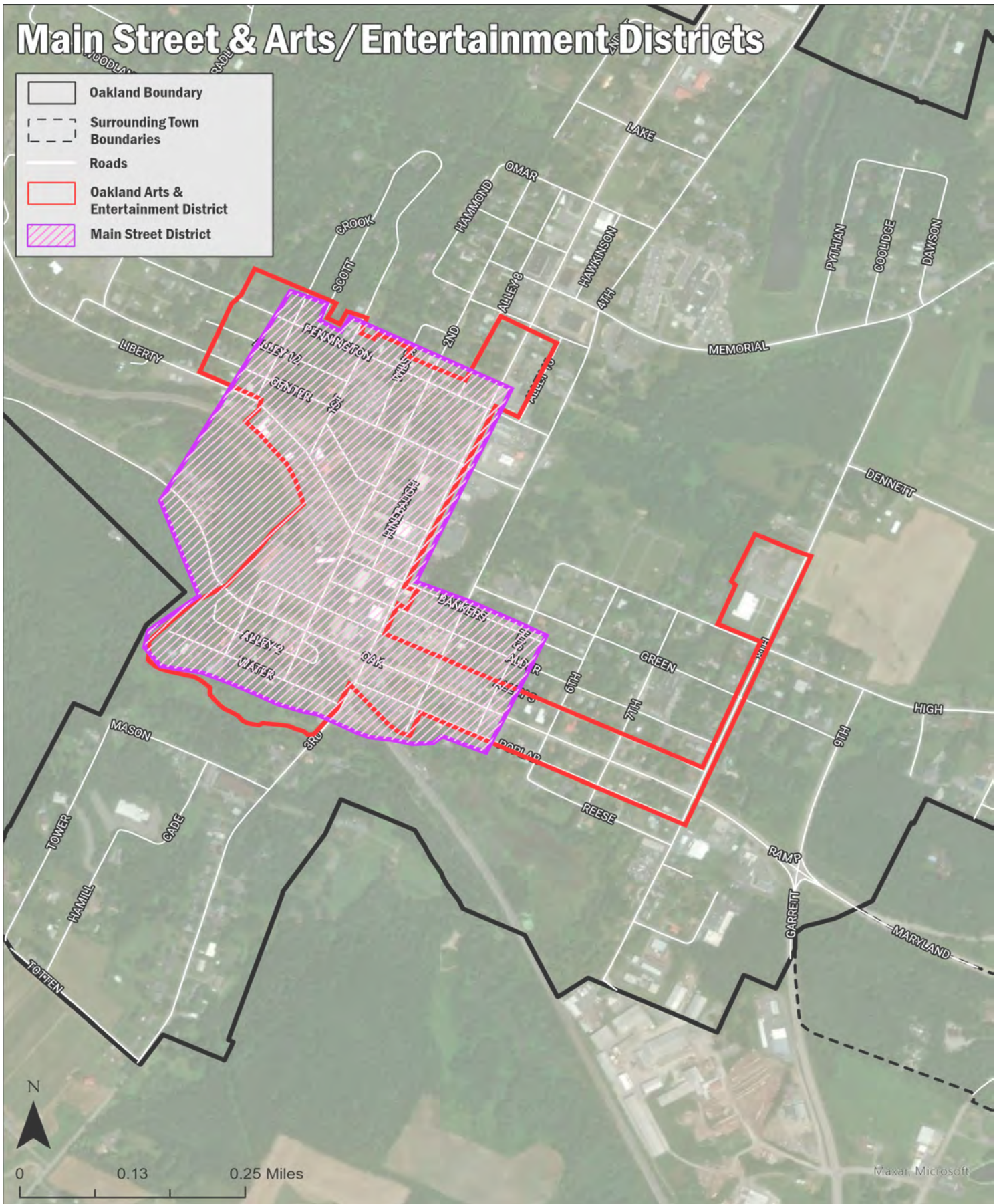
Oakland's Arts & Entertainment District further contributes to its economic vitality by promoting community involvement, increasing tourism, and driving revitalization efforts. Through tax-related incentives, the district attracts artists, arts organizations, and creative enterprises, which fosters a vibrant cultural scene. As a unique Western Maryland destination, it preserves the community's traditions while embracing new artistic expressions, offering residents and visitors a diverse and engaging experience

Supporting these efforts, the Greater Oakland Business Association (GOBA) plays a critical role in fostering local business success. Through marketing initiatives, outreach programs, and collaboration, GOBA helps businesses grow while strengthening the local economy. By leveraging the combined strengths of its Main Street designation, Arts & Entertainment District, and GOBA's business advocacy, Oakland is well-positioned to advance its economic development goals and enhance the prosperity of the community (see Map 5 for Main Street and Oakland's A&E boundaries).





Map 5: Main Street & Arts/Entertainment Districts





# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

### Action

1

**Enhance and expand the coordinated effort for monthly or quarterly meetings among the Town, Greater Oakland Business Association, Garrett County, and the Garrett County Chamber of Commerce to strengthen regional collaboration and work towards common goals/interests.**

These efforts are essential for fostering regional collaboration and driving economic growth. Expanding meetings provide a structured forum for discussing shared goals, addressing challenges, and identifying opportunities for business development, tourism, and community revitalization on a regular basis. By strengthening communication and collaboration, local leaders and stakeholders can align efforts, leverage resources more effectively, and ensure that policies and initiatives support both the local and regional economy. A coordinated approach helps streamline decision-making, reduce redundancy, and enhance the overall impact of economic and community development strategies.

Regularly scheduled meetings also create opportunities to develop strategic initiatives that benefit businesses, residents, and visitors alike. By fostering partnerships between public and private sectors, these discussions can lead to new marketing campaigns, grant opportunities, infrastructure improvements, and business-friendly policies. Additionally, ongoing dialogue between these key organizations ensures that local businesses have a voice in shaping economic policies and community initiatives. Strengthening this collaborative effort will not only enhance Oakland's economic vitality but also position it as a key player in Garrett County's broader development efforts, fostering long-term prosperity for the entire region.

### **The Town should continue to take an active approach to:**

- Increase the frequency and participation in discussions to enhance economic development strategies and generate new ideas for business growth.
- Identify and prioritize joint projects or initiatives that align with regional goals, such as grant applications, events, or infrastructure enhancements.
- Invite other regional organizations, local businesses, or community leaders to participate in meetings as needed to broaden perspectives and resources.



## Action

# 2 Strategically identify and attract industries and businesses that complement existing ones while addressing any gaps in the market.

Focusing on a targeted approach to business recruitment, Oakland can strengthen their economic base, enhance job opportunities, and create a more vibrant and diverse marketplace. This ensures that new businesses align with existing industries, fostering collaboration and mutual support rather than direct competition. A thoughtful approach to business attraction also helps fill unmet consumer and business needs, reducing economic leakage where residents and companies are forced to seek goods and services outside the community.

By attracting a mix of businesses—such as retail, professional services, technology firms, and hospitality establishments—the Town can create a balanced economic ecosystem that supports a wide range of employment opportunities and services. This not only benefits residents by providing more options for shopping, dining, and employment but also encourages entrepreneurship and innovation, as businesses in complementary industries can collaborate and create new opportunities. By conducting market research, engaging with stakeholders, and leveraging economic development incentives, Oakland can effectively identify and recruit businesses that will strengthen the local economy while fostering a dynamic and sustainable future.

### The Town should continue to take an active approach to:

- Survey residents and visitors to identify unmet needs in retail, services, dining, entertainment, and health and wellness that could be addressed throughout the Town.
- Facilitate connections between entrepreneurs and business owners with additional resources (see below) to support the attraction of new businesses.

## Additional Resources

Entrepreneurs and business owners in Oakland have access to a variety of resources designed to support the attraction of new businesses and foster economic growth.

- **Garrett County Department of Business Development and Chamber of Commerce:** These departments offers assistance with business planning, financial guidance, and site selection. They provide support for both new and existing businesses aiming to establish or expand in the area.
- **Maryland Small Business Development Center (SBDC) – Western Region:** The SBDC provides free individualized consulting and training programs for entrepreneurs at all stages. Their services include business plan development, financial analysis, and market research assistance.
- **Maryland Business Support:** The state of Maryland provides resources, workforce development, and connections to help businesses thrive. This includes information on financing, tax credits, and other incentives available to businesses operating in Maryland.



## Action

### 3 Organize more community events in collaboration with local businesses, Garrett County, and the Chamber of Commerce.

Organizing more community events is a vital strategy for stimulating retail and dining sales while increasing foot traffic in Oakland. Well-planned events attract both residents and visitors, creating opportunities for local businesses to showcase their offerings and engage with new customers. Festivals, farmers' markets, seasonal celebrations, and cultural events encourage people to explore downtown areas, leading to increased spending at shops, restaurants, and other establishments.

Additionally, these events enhance the Town's sense of community, strengthen its identity, and provide entertainment that encourages repeat visits. By fostering a vibrant and welcoming atmosphere, community events contribute to sustained economic growth and help position Oakland as a dynamic destination for both commerce and leisure.

#### The Town should continue to take an active approach to:

- Collaborate with partners to brainstorm a variety of community events (e.g., Festivals, farmer's markets, street fairs, holiday-themed events) that appeal to a broad audience and align with local business interests.
  - Explore diverse event formats such as pop-up shops, themed dining experiences, food truck festivals, craft fairs, or outdoor concerts to draw varied crowds and cater to different demographics.
- Identify and schedule high-traffic times of the year to maximize retail impact, such as holiday shopping seasons, summer weekends, and back-to-school periods.

### Case Study: Deep Creek Dunk

"Deep Creek Dunk," is an event that kicked off in 1999 that is organized in partnership with Special Olympics Maryland and supported by the Garrett County Chamber of Commerce. Participants take a chilly plunge into Deep Creek Lake to raise funds for Special Olympics athletes. Local businesses contribute by sponsoring teams, providing warm beverages, and hosting post-dunk celebrations. The event draws participants and spectators from across the region, leading to increased foot traffic and patronage of local establishments.

Participation in the Deep Creek Dunk in Maryland has varied over the years. The 8th annual event in 2006 drew over 500 participants, growing to 799 dunkers by 2017. In 2024, the 25th Deep Creek Dunk saw more than 400 participants take the plunge.

## Action

### **4 Proactively pursue grant opportunities by strengthening collaboration with the Garrett Arts Council and Garrett County Economic Development.**

Strengthening collaboration between the Town of Oakland, the Garrett County Arts Council (GCAC), and Garrett County Economic Development is pivotal for enhancing the Town's capacity to secure funding and support for local projects and initiatives aimed at driving economic development and business growth. The GCAC serves as a major funder of community arts development, offering grants to arts organizations, programming, events, and independent artists within Garrett County. In Fiscal Year 2024, the GCAC Board of Directors allocated \$75,000 in Community Arts Development funding for various grants, including Program/Project Grants, Arts-in-Education Grants, Independent Artist Grant Awards, and Emergency Artist Relief Grant Awards. By partnering with the GCAC, the Town of Oakland can tap into these resources to support arts-related projects that stimulate economic activity and enrich the community's cultural landscape.

Simultaneously, collaboration with Garrett County Economic Development can open avenues for additional funding opportunities. For instance, the County offers programs such as the Small Business Marketing Grant, which aids in the promotion of small, non-agriculture businesses with 25 or fewer employees based in Garrett County. By aligning efforts with these organizations, Oakland can leverage available grants and support mechanisms to foster business growth, attract new enterprises, and enhance the Town's economic vitality.

#### **The Town should continue to take an active approach to:**

- Schedule monthly or quarterly meetings with representatives from GCAC and Garrett County Economic Development to discuss upcoming grant opportunities, align on community needs, and explore potential collaborative projects.
- Encourage Town officials and relevant staff to attend grant workshops and training sessions offered by GCAC and Garrett County Economic Development.
- Leverage the Arts and Entertainment District incentives available to attract creative enterprises and support arts-related projects within the Town.

## Action

### **5 Implement a series of initiatives aimed at making the downtown more inviting and engaging for residents and visitors.**

A thriving downtown acts as the heart of a community, fostering commerce, culture, and social connections while drawing both businesses and visitors. Investing in aesthetic enhancements—such as beautification projects—and hosting community events can create an inviting atmosphere that boosts foot traffic and supports local businesses. These improvements not only drive economic activity but also foster a deep sense of pride and engagement among residents.

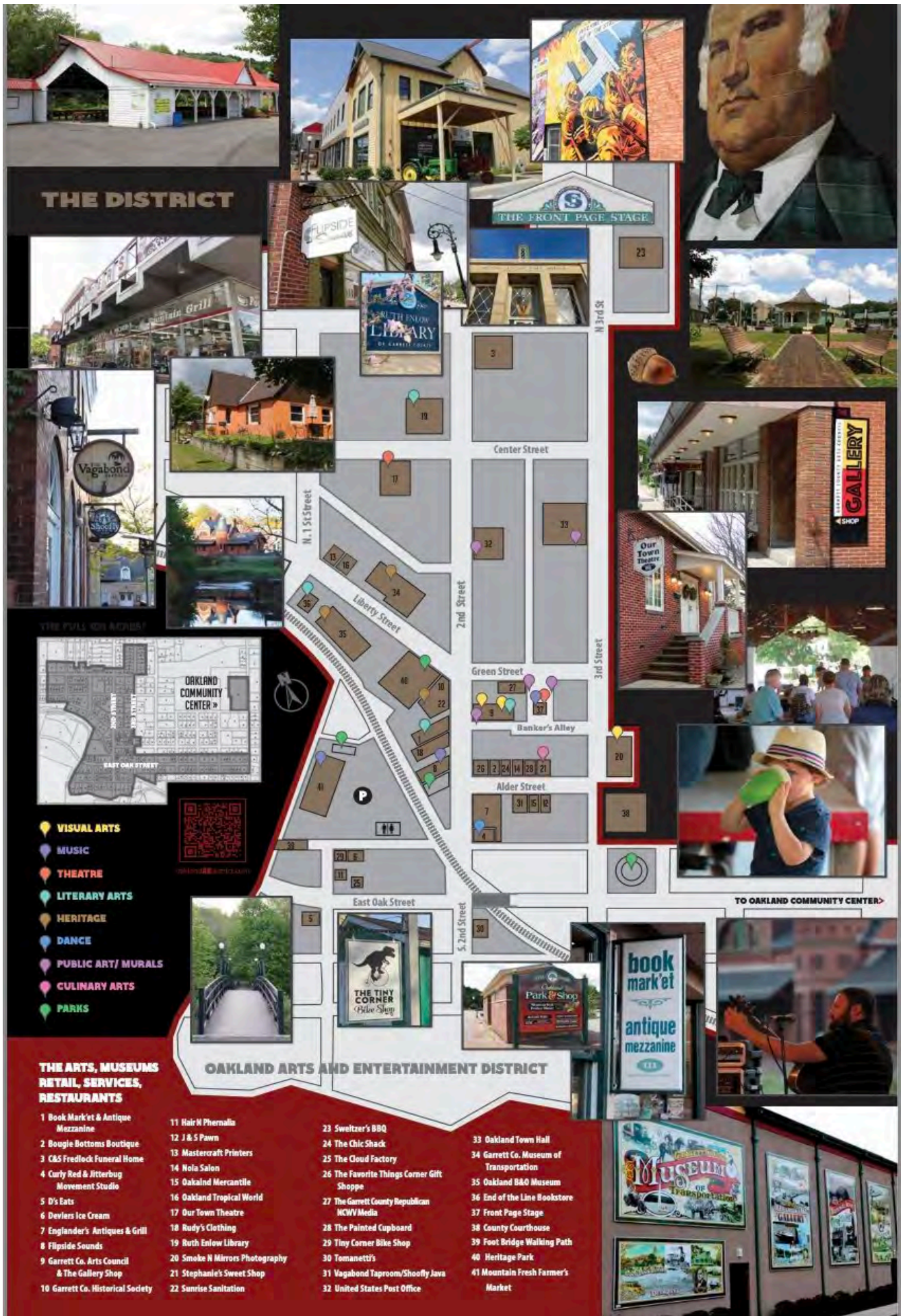
Moreover, a well-maintained and vibrant downtown can spark broader community revitalization efforts. Enhancing public spaces, supporting local entrepreneurs, and promoting cultural initiatives help cultivate an energetic environment that attracts new residents and visitors. This increased activity encourages further investment, strengthening the local economy. By focusing on downtown revitalization, communities can lay the groundwork for sustainable long-term growth and prosperity (See Page 51 for recent projects and initiatives in collaboration with the Arts & Entertainment District).

#### **The Town should continue to take an active approach to:**

- Continue to consider decorative lighting elements, such as LED string lights or illuminated signs, to create a more attractive and welcoming ambiance.
- Continue to collaborate with local artists and the Garrett Arts Council to design and install public art installations, murals, and sculptures that reflect the character and heritage of Downtown Oakland.







Source: [www.oaklandaedistrict.com](http://www.oaklandaedistrict.com)

## Action

### **6 Work with strategic partners to implement downtown façade improvement programs to leverage the Town's historical and mixed-use properties.**

By highlighting the preservation and revitalization of these properties, the Town can attract both visitors and businesses, fostering economic growth and community pride. Upgraded facades can also support mixed-use development by creating more inviting spaces for retail, dining, and residential purposes, helping to strengthen the local economy. These improvements not only enhance the visual appeal of downtown but also contribute to the long-term sustainability of the Town's cultural and historical identity, making it a more vibrant and attractive destination for residents and tourists alike.

#### **The Town should continue to take an active approach to:**

- Develop streetscape standards to improve the overall aesthetics and cohesive branding of the area, while maintaining an informal approach to avoid deterring businesses (see Page 53 for sample design guidelines).
- Implement initiatives to promote historic preservation, safeguarding historic buildings and structures within the community.

### **DownTown Façade Improvement Programs**

Garrett County, has actively engaged in enhancing its downtown areas through various façade improvement initiatives aimed at preserving historic features and stimulating economic growth. The Garrett County Community Action Committee (GCCAC) has been instrumental in these efforts, securing funding to support local businesses in upgrading their exteriors. For instance, in 2021, GCCAC received a \$50,000 grant to assist business establishments with façade improvements, contributing to the revitalization of the downtown area.

The Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) also offers the Maryland Facade Improvement Program (MFIP), which provides funding to improve the exteriors of businesses located in Maryland Sustainable Communities.



## Sample Streetscape Design Guidelines

### Complete Streets

Refers to streets designed to accommodate a variety of users (pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, etc.), including people of all ages and those with disabilities. The specific design of complete streets varies according to the community setting (i.e. rural, urban, suburban) and the type of road. Typical elements of complete streets include: sidewalks, bike lanes or wide shoulders, painted crosswalks and pedestrian signals and traffic-calming measures.



### Street Furniture

Incorporating elements like benches, trash receptacles, and bike racks enhances the usability of public spaces. Proper placement ensures they serve their purpose without obstructing pedestrian flow.



### Context Sensitive Design

An approach to transportation infrastructure that preserves or enhances an area's scenic, aesthetic, historic, and environmental resources and reflects community needs and priorities. Typical elements of context sensitive design include: Natural features such as street trees, rain gardens, hanging flower baskets, and planter boxes. Street furniture that meets people's needs while enhancing community aesthetics such as benches, recycling bins, kiosks, bike racks, and newspaper containers. Encourage signage such as banners hanging from light poles.



### Envision landscaping and lighting

Design standards should include specific provisions for the type and placement of amenities such as, landscaping and lighting in the downtown.





## Action

# 7 Develop a comprehensive downtown economic development plan.

Developing a comprehensive downtown economic development plan is essential for revitalizing and sustaining Oakland's central business district. As a designated Main Street Maryland Community, Oakland has committed to enhancing the economic potential of its traditional downtown area. A well-structured plan would address critical issues such as business growth, infrastructure modernization, and public safety improvements, creating an environment conducive to business growth and community engagement. By focusing on these areas, the plan aims to attract new investments, support local enterprises, and foster a vibrant community that reflects Oakland's rich cultural heritage.

Additionally, the plan should prioritize support for small businesses by streamlining permitting processes and offering workforce development programs. Collaborating with existing Business Improvement Districts can further enhance efforts to improve public spaces, safety, and economic vitality, ensuring a holistic approach to downtown revitalization. By integrating sustainable practices, green infrastructure and preparing for climate change, the plan ensures that downtown Oakland remains a place of continuous growth and revitalization.

### The Town should continue to take an active approach to:

- Identify and pursue funding opportunities to secure financial resources for developing the plan.
- Partner with strategic organizations to gain technical assistance and support for downtown revitalization efforts.
- Collaborate with economic development professionals to guide the creation and implementation of the downtown economic development plan.







# CHAPTER FIVE

## HOUSING



# INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

The Housing chapter highlights the importance of ensuring fair and affordable housing for all residents of Oakland. The primary goal is to provide accessible, high-quality housing options that cater to a diverse population. Collaboration with local organizations and alignment with county initiatives are essential strategies for advancing housing efforts. Although Oakland has a low number of homeless individuals, fostering partnerships and coordination will strengthen efforts to address housing challenges and promote an inclusive community with diverse and quality housing options for all.

## Legislative Framework

### HB 1045

Enacted in 2019, HB 1045 amended the Land Use Article, requiring all Maryland jurisdictions to incorporate a housing element into their Comprehensive Plans after June 2020. This element must address the need for affordable housing, including workforce and low-income housing, and may include goals, objectives, policies, and standards to guide housing development. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines housing affordability using the “housing cost burden” standard, which considers households cost-burdened if they spend 30% or more of their gross income on housing expenses, including rent, mortgage, utilities, and taxes.

### HB 90

Enacted in 2021, HB 90 builds on HB 1045 by requiring municipalities and non-charter counties to “affirmatively further fair housing.” This legislation mandates that the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) submit a fair housing report to the Governor and General Assembly every five years, starting in 2023. The law defines affirmatively furthering fair housing as taking meaningful actions to eliminate segregation, promote inclusive communities, and ensure compliance with civil rights and fair housing laws. While jurisdictions have flexibility in implementing these requirements, they must take substantive steps to address disparities and foster equitable housing opportunities.

2025 Area Median Income for Oakland:		\$59,904
Household Income Levels/Ranges		
Workforce Ownership Range (60% - 120% AMI):		\$35,942 - \$71,884
Workforce Rental Range (50% - 120% AMI):		\$29,952 - \$71,884
Low Income (<60% AMI):		\$35,942
Affordable Homeowner/Rental Monthly Payments (based on 30% of Household Income)		
Workforce Ownership Range (60%-120% AMI):		\$725 - \$1,487
Workforce Rental Range (50%-100% AMI):		\$674 - \$1,123
Low Income Threshold:		\$725

# HOUSING PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS



## Action

# 1

### **Proactively address poverty and homelessness in the Town of Oakland.**

Proactively addressing poverty and homelessness in the Town of Oakland is essential for fostering a strong, resilient, and inclusive community. By implementing strategic initiatives that provide access to affordable housing, workforce development, and essential social services, the Town can help residents achieve stability and improve their quality of life. Addressing these challenges early through partnerships with local organizations, nonprofits, and government agencies can prevent long-term economic and social hardships. Additionally, investing in supportive services such as job training, mental health resources, and emergency assistance programs ensures that vulnerable populations have the tools they need to succeed. A proactive approach not only enhances economic mobility for individuals and families but also strengthens the overall community by reducing strain on public resources and creating a healthier, more prosperous environment for all residents.

#### **The Town of Oakland should:**

- Allocate resources to provide essential services, temporary housing, and support programs for individuals experiencing homelessness.
- Partner with organizations such as Garrett Lighthouse, the Health Department, Garrett Regional Medical Center, and others to share resources and to promote community-wide support initiatives.

## Local Resources

In Maryland and Garrett County, several resources are dedicated to combating poverty and homelessness:

- **Garrett County Community Action Committee (GCCAC):** GCCAC offers a range of services, including emergency shelter, housing case management, and assistance with utility bills. Their Homeless Prevention and Rapid Rehousing Program provides housing counseling and access to community resources for low-income tenants.
- **HRDC Homeless Transitional Housing:** The Human Resources Development Commission (HRDC) operates a 14-bed transitional housing shelter for homeless women and their children. Residents can stay for up to 24 months, receiving intensive case management to transition from homelessness to self-sufficiency.
- **Garrett County Lighthouse, Inc.:** This organization provides resources such as the Dove Center, which offers temporary shelter, advocacy, support groups, and counseling for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.
- **Safe Harbor:** Safe Harbor offers crisis and respite services, including emergency shelter and support for individuals facing homelessness.





## Action

# 2 **Continue to support and consult with local and regional organizations promoting housing affordability to ensure opportunities exist within the Town of Oakland for all who wish to live there.**

Engaging with relevant organizations, the Town can access valuable expertise, resources, and funding opportunities that will help create affordable housing solutions tailored to the needs of the local population. These partnerships can also ensure that the Town stays informed on best practices and emerging policies related to affordable housing, helping to address challenges such as rising housing costs, limited supply, and income disparities. Collaboration with regional partners can further amplify the Town's efforts, allowing for a broader, more coordinated approach to addressing housing needs across the area.

Incorporating input from a range of local and regional organizations ensures that the Town's housing strategies align with the realities faced by residents, from low-income families to workforce individuals seeking affordable options. It also ensures that policies are in place to mitigate displacement, support housing stability, and provide safe, quality living environments for all residents. By prioritizing affordable housing and working with partners who share this vision, Oakland can create sustainable housing opportunities that meet the needs of diverse populations, foster economic mobility, and enhance community well-being.

### **The Town should continue to take an active approach to:**

- Develop and maintain partnerships to address housing affordability.
  - Compile and regularly update a list of key organizations, such as the Garrett County Community Action Committee, Garrett Workforce Housing Alliance, Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development, USDA Rural Development's Rural Housing Service, and Habitat for Humanity.
    - Establish consistent communication and hold regular meetings with these organizations to stay informed about their initiatives and challenges.
- Collaborate with relevant organizations such as Garrett County Community Action on housing projects and programs to align efforts with the Town's goals and address community housing needs effectively.

## Action

# 3

## **Ensure all housing in Oakland is affordable and fair by identifying potential barriers and continually reviewing policies and ordinances.**

By identifying potential barriers—such as zoning restrictions, discrimination, or inadequate infrastructure—Oakland can proactively address issues that might prevent certain groups from accessing affordable housing. Continually reviewing policies and ordinances allows the Town to adapt to changing economic conditions, population growth, and evolving housing needs. This ongoing assessment helps identify areas where the Town may unintentionally be hindering access to affordable housing or where new policies may be needed to support fair housing practices.

A commitment to affordable and fair housing creates a foundation for long-term community stability and ensures that all residents, regardless of their background or financial situation, have equal access to safe and quality housing. By systematically identifying barriers and regularly updating policies, Oakland can prevent discriminatory practices, promote housing diversity, and ensure that everyone has the opportunity to live in the community. This proactive approach fosters a healthier, more vibrant Town where residents are empowered to contribute to the local economy and society.

### **The Town should continue to take an active approach to:**

- Identify Barriers to Affordable Housing:
  - Review and revise ordinances to ensure they are inclusive and support a variety of housing options.
  - Review the Maryland Housing Needs Assessment & 10-Year Strategic Plan to help identify barriers that may limit housing accessibility or affordability.
  - Promote an inclusive housing market by implementing policies and initiatives by the State of Maryland to encourage equitable access to housing for all residents, regardless of income, race, or background.
- Support Access to Affordable Housing:
  - Modify zoning laws to facilitate the development of affordable housing, such as allowing higher-density housing or mixed-use developments.
  - Develop programs or incentives for developers to create affordable housing units.
  - Monitor local housing trends and implement measures to prevent displacement of existing residents.

## Action

### 4 **Develop a Blighted Homes/Structure Inventory for targeted areas of improvement.**

Blighted and abandoned properties often become magnets for criminal activities, posing significant safety risks to residents. By identifying and cataloging these structures, local authorities can prioritize their demolition, rehabilitation, or repurposing, thereby reducing hazards and improving the overall quality of life in the community. This proactive approach ensures that the Town remains a safe and attractive place for its residents, fostering a sense of pride and stability.

Another key purpose of creating this inventory is to stimulate economic development and enhance property values in Oakland. Blighted properties can significantly detract from the aesthetic appeal of neighborhoods, discouraging investment and lowering property values. By systematically identifying and addressing these structures, the Town can create opportunities for new development and revitalization projects. This process not only attracts new businesses and residents but also increases the tax base, providing additional revenue for community improvements. In turn, this revitalization effort can lead to a more vibrant and prosperous community, encouraging long-term growth and sustainability.

#### **The Town should continue to take an active approach to:**

- Define criteria for identifying blighted homes and structures within the Town, considering factors such as structural integrity, occupancy status, code violations, and visual deterioration.
- Encourage community members to report suspected blighted properties through accessible channels.
- Collaborate with the County to identify and prioritize areas that require greater focus on blight remediation efforts.

### **Key Insight**

In Maryland, the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) offers resources to assist in this process. For instance, Baltimore City provides a centralized Vacant Property Resources and Information Page, which directs the public to various resources offering information on properties throughout the city.

Additionally, the Maryland Department of the Environment's Land Restoration Program offers fact sheets for each project site under its oversight, which can be valuable for understanding environmental considerations when assessing blighted properties.

Beyond Maryland, the Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania offers guidance on creating and managing vacant property inventories, including funding strategies and data sources.





## Action

## 5

**Strengthen and update the enforcement of property maintenance codes.**

Strengthening and updating the enforcement of property maintenance codes is essential for maintaining the safety, appearance, and livability of a community. Well-maintained properties contribute to a positive neighborhood environment, enhance property values, and promote community pride. By ensuring that property owners comply with established maintenance standards, the Town can prevent blight, reduce safety hazards, and discourage neglect. Effective enforcement of property maintenance codes helps address issues such as dilapidated structures, overgrown lawns, and unsafe conditions, ensuring that properties remain attractive and functional for residents and visitors alike.

In addition to improving aesthetics and safety, enforcing property maintenance codes can support broader economic development goals. Clean, well-maintained properties can attract businesses and investors, creating a more vibrant and appealing community. Updated codes that reflect current standards and best practices ensure that properties meet modern safety, environmental, and sustainability requirements. By regularly reviewing and strengthening these codes, the Town can keep pace with growth and ensure that its neighborhoods remain desirable places to live, work, and invest.

**The Town should continue to take an active approach to:**

- Conduct a comprehensive review of existing property maintenance codes and regulations to identify areas for improvement, updates, and clarification.
- Work with Garrett County to strengthen and update the enforcement of the property maintenance codes to hold property owners accountable for maintaining their properties in compliance with established standards.



## Action

# 6 **Explore partnerships and create incentives to encourage developers to prioritize affordable and diverse housing options, with a particular focus on senior citizens and younger families.**

Exploring partnerships and creating incentives to encourage developers to prioritize affordable and diverse housing options is crucial for fostering a balanced and inclusive community. By focusing on senior citizens and younger families, the Town can ensure that all residents have access to suitable housing that meets their specific needs. Seniors often require accessible, affordable housing that allows them to age in place, while younger families seek homes that are affordable yet spacious enough to accommodate their growing needs. By working with developers and offering incentives such as tax credits, streamlined zoning processes, or funding assistance, the Town can attract investment in these vital housing sectors. This approach not only addresses the housing needs of diverse populations but also promotes long-term community stability, reduces displacement, and supports economic growth by creating housing that serves a broad range of residents.

### **The Town should continue to take an active approach to:**

- Encourage a diverse and inclusive housing stock:
  - Promote the development of various housing types, including single-family homes, multi-family units, and accessory dwelling units, to meet the needs of different demographics.
    - Collaborate with relevant housing organizations to work to expand housing opportunities by increasing the supply of affordable & quality rental housing through advocacy, education, and collaboration.
  - Utilize zoning and subdivision regulations to promote or require a broader spectrum of housing styles, types of housing, and promote more affordable housing.
  - Allow seniors to age in place by increasing Accessory Dwelling Units options.
- Collaborate with various housing organizations:
  - Partner with local and regional housing organizations to identify and create opportunities for senior housing and housing for younger families.
  - Work collaboratively to develop and implement a variety of incentives, including tax breaks, expedited permitting processes, density bonuses, grants, and low-interest loans, to encourage developers to incorporate affordable and sustainable housing into their projects.

### Example For Diverse Housing Options:

The images below are prime examples of what a diverse and inclusive housing stock looks like. They showcase a variety of housing types, from affordable apartments and single-family homes to senior-friendly units, all designed to meet the needs of different demographics. These options reflect a commitment to providing accessible, quality housing for residents of all ages, income levels, and family structures, contributing to a well-rounded and thriving community.



*Diverse housing option include senior homes (above), ADUs (right), and Townhomes (below).*





## Action

# 7

### **Provide residents with proactive resources and support to prevent blight.**

By offering resources such as property maintenance education, financial assistance for repairs, and access to support services, the Town can empower homeowners to maintain their properties and address issues before they become larger, more costly problems. Preventing blight at its root helps avoid the negative impacts associated with neglected properties, such as declining property values, increased crime, and diminished community pride. It also ensures that neighborhoods remain vibrant, safe, and welcoming to all residents.

Proactively addressing blight not only benefits individual homeowners but also contributes to the overall well-being of the Town. By investing in prevention, the Town can minimize the need for expensive remediation efforts, which often come with financial and logistical challenges. Providing residents with the tools and support they need to maintain their homes helps create a more sustainable and resilient community, reducing the long-term costs of urban decay and enhancing the quality of life for everyone. Additionally, proactive efforts to prevent blight can attract new residents and businesses, stimulating economic development and further strengthening the community's sense of pride.

#### **The Town should continue to take an active approach to:**

- Create educational materials, such as brochures, flyer's, and online resources, to inform residents about property maintenance best practices, blight prevention strategies, and local regulations.
- Organize workshops or training sessions on property management and blight prevention topics.
- Partner with financial institutions, Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development, Garrett County, and others to leverage funding and resources for eligible residents to address blight-related issues, undertake property improvements, and make necessary repairs.



A photograph of a park scene. In the foreground, there are two wooden picnic tables with black metal legs on a grassy area. Behind them is a playground with various equipment including slides, climbing structures, and a tunnel. The playground is surrounded by a dense line of green trees. A large tree trunk is visible on the right side of the image. The sky is bright and clear.

# **CHAPTER SIX**

## **COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES**



# INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

The Community Facilities Chapter focuses on outlining and expanding the facilities and services that are available to residents, highlighting their significant role in improving the overall quality of life. These community facilities encompass a wide range of spaces and services that contribute to the social, cultural, recreational, educational, and health needs of the population. From parks and recreation centers to libraries, health clinics, and cultural institutions, these facilities provide essential opportunities for residents to connect, learn, engage in physical activity, and maintain well-being. They serve as hubs for community interaction, fostering a sense of belonging and pride among residents.

Oakland is dedicated to enhancing and protecting its community assets through ongoing efforts to preserve historic resources and expand infrastructure. The Town recognizes the importance of these facilities in both addressing current needs and preparing for future growth. By investing in the development and maintenance of public facilities, the Town aims to create a sustainable environment that supports the needs of its residents, now and in the years to come. This commitment to infrastructure improvements ensures that the Town can provide high-quality services that contribute to a vibrant, thriving community.

## MUNICIPAL BUILDING

Town Hall, located at 15 South Third Street in Oakland, Maryland, serves as the central hub for administration and community engagement. Town Hall provides residents with access to essential municipal services and information. Additionally, it functions as a versatile meeting space, accommodating various community events, public hearings, and gatherings that foster civic participation and strengthen community bonds.

## SCHOOLS

The Garrett County Board of Education is responsible for the public school system serving Oakland. Southern Garrett High School (SGHS) is the sole school within the Town limits. In the 2023-2024 academic year, SGHS enrolled 578 students across grades nine through twelve. However, beginning with the 2024-2025 school year, the school will undergo a grade realignment to accommodate grades seven through twelve, with an estimated enrollment of 885 students. This adjustment aims to better serve the educational needs of the community and optimize resource utilization.

In addition to SGHS, Broad Ford Elementary School (BFES) and Yough Glades Elementary School (YGES) serve students residing within the Town limits. BFES currently enrolls 547 students from Pre-K 3-year-olds (PK3) through fifth grade. YGES enrolls 275 students from Pre-K 4-year-olds (PK4) through fifth grade. Notably, for the 2024-2025 school year, BFES will expand to include grades PK3 through sixth grade, while YGES will continue to serve grades PK4 through fifth grade. These changes reflect the district's commitment to providing quality education and accommodating the evolving needs of the community.



## **LIBRARY**

Town residents have access to the Oakland branch of the Ruth Enlow Library system, which also serves the Towns of Loch Lynn, Deer Park, Mountain Lake Park, and the nearby unincorporated areas of the county. In 2023, the library developed a strategic action plan for 2023-2024 to guide its programs and services. The Oakland branch offers a variety of resources, including books, magazines, videos, DVDs, audiobooks, wireless internet, and online databases. Computers are available for public use, equipped with internet access and word processing software.

## **HEALTH SERVICES**

Garrett Regional Medical Center (GRMC) in Oakland is the primary healthcare facility serving the Town and the surrounding areas. This award-winning, Joint Commission-accredited acute care hospital offers 55 inpatient beds and provides comprehensive healthcare services to a population of approximately 46,000 residents across Garrett County and neighboring communities in Maryland, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia. Through its affiliation with WVU Medicine, GRMC delivers specialized care in cardiopulmonary, heart and vascular, cancer treatment, infusion therapy, nephrology, orthopedics, and wound care, among other services. The hospital's facilities include a four-bed Intensive Care Unit, a 10-bed Subacute Rehabilitation Unit, a Family-Centered Maternity Suite, a 13-bed Outpatient Surgical Unit with a four-bed Surgical Suite, and 24/7 Emergency Services. Its laboratory, radiology, and cardiopulmonary departments are equipped with state-of-the-art technology to support a wide range of diagnostic and therapeutic procedures.

The Town also features two home health care centers and the Oakland Nursing and Rehabilitation Center, which provides 24-hour skilled nursing care for both short-term rehabilitation and long-term care. The facility offers 100 beds with private and semi-private suites, along with on-site pharmacy, X-ray, and laboratory services.

## **SOCIAL SERVICES**

The Garrett County Department of Social Services (DSS), administers a comprehensive array of social service programs aimed at supporting individuals and families within the community. These services include child and adult protective services, foster care, adoption assistance, child day care subsidies, elderly services, in-home aid, child support enforcement, public welfare grants, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and medical assistance.

## **SOLID WASTE**

The Garrett County Solid Waste Disposal and Recycling Facility, commonly known as the County Landfill, approximately 3.5 miles north of Oakland. Operated by the Solid Waste and Recycling Division of the County's Department of Public Works, the facility serves all County residents, businesses, Towns, visitors, and private haulers collecting waste generated within the County.

## PARKS & RECREATION

The Oakland Community Center is a versatile facility offering both a gym and a conference room, available for rental in convenient 30-minute increments. It provides an option for staying active with affordable monthly walking passes. Whether you need a place to walk indoors, host a birthday party, or hold a meeting, the Oakland Community Center is a valuable local resource .

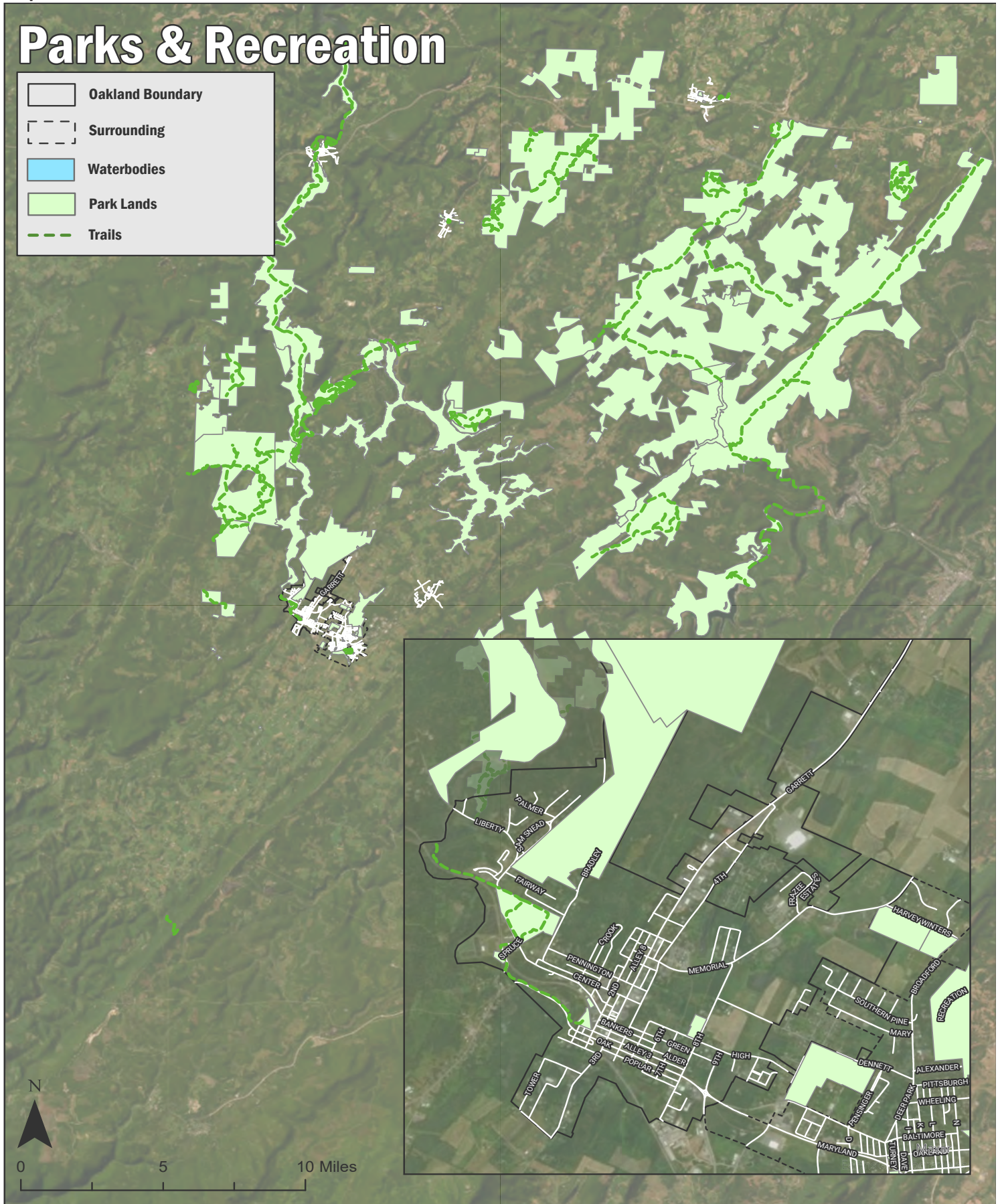
Oakland Park facilities include:

- **Broadford Recreational Park** - This park owned by the Town of Oakland, which is a family-friendly park that boasts numerous amenities. The park features scenic picnic spots with charcoal grills, rentable pavilions, a lake with a beach and swimming area, three playgrounds, a beach volleyball court, basketball courts, and a boat launch. Visitors can also rent boats, canoes, kayaks, and paddle boats. An annual Independence Day Celebration, complete with a patriotic concert band performance and a fireworks display, adds to the park's festive atmosphere. Broadford Park is open daily from sunrise to sunset, from Memorial Day to Labor Day. The park also includes a three-mile multi-use trail system for activities such as walking, hiking, biking, etc.
- **Oakland Dog Park** - Oakland also features an off-leash dog park, located along the Town walking trail, where well-behaved dogs can exercise safely in a clean environment.
- **Glades Park** - This park offers playground equipment, basketball and pickleball courts, and a fishing pond for children and handicapped individuals, along with a paved walking trail that connects to the main Town walking trail. The park also features a 120-seat pavilion available for rental, and the Glades Pavilion is an ideal location for events, with full kitchen and bathroom facilities.
- **Rotary Park** - Located on the Little Yough River, there are picnic tables, grills, a playground and in close proximity to walking trails/historical markers.
- **Mountain Fresh Pavilion** - Situated in downtown Oakland next to Rotary Park, the Mountain Fresh Pavilion is an ideal venue for community events. Its central location ensures easy accessibility, making it perfect for hosting activities such as fundraising runs, walks, and other gatherings. The pavilion features 34 picnic tables (no benches), and restrooms are available in the Town parking lot.

Oakland Trails include:

- **Oakland Heritage Trail** - The Glades Biking/Walking Trail starts at the Oakland Town Parking Lot at the Asa McCain Walking Bridge. It is a one mile, lit path, which passes by the historic Washington Spring on the way to the Glades Town Park
- **Glades Park Loop Path** - The walking path at Glades Park is a paved, one-mile loop that circles the park, offering a smooth and scenic route for all ages.
- **88 Bridge Trail** - The trailhead is connected to the Glades Park Loop. It is 7/10 of a mile long each way. The trail takes you from the Glades Park to the 88 Bridge and Civil War blockhouses. The trail is lined with five historical markers explaining the role of the B&O Railroad in Garrett County.

Map 6: Parks & Recreation





## **GOLF COURSE**

The Oakland Golf Club is an 18-hole golf course located on the north side of Oakland, established in 1937. Built on the Town's "Water Farm" with additional land purchased to total 65 acres, the original 9-hole course opened in October 1937. Oakland Golf Club, Inc. was formed to manage the course, and has maintained a productive partnership with the Town, hosting community charity events, employing residents, and benefiting from grants to upgrade and maintain facilities.

## **POLICE**

The Town of Oakland is served by the Oakland Police Department, which is dedicated to enhancing the quality of life and reducing crime through community partnerships and problem-solving strategies. Oakland has one full-time chief that is in charge of everything in the Town limits. For law enforcement services outside the Town limits, the Garrett County Sheriff's Office provides coverage throughout the

## **FIRE**

The Oakland Volunteer Fire Department, located at 31 South 3rd Street, is a 100% volunteer organization providing emergency services to the community. With about 40 members, one-third of whom are active, the department operates a fleet that includes: 1 Engine, 1 Engine Tanker, 1 Quint with a 100' aerial ladder, 1 Utility/brush truck, 2 boats (one aluminum smooth bottom and one inflatable smooth bottom), and 1 ATV for backcountry rescues and brush fires.

## **EMS**

Garrett County Public Safety and Emergency Management oversees the 9-1-1 Communications Center, which operates 24/7 to receive and disseminate all emergency calls for assistance within the county, including its municipalities. All 9-1-1 call-takers are trained to provide Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) instructions to callers as needed and appropriate.

## **RESCUE SQUADS**

The Southern Garrett County Rescue Squad, located in Oakland, is one of four dedicated rescue squads in Garrett County. Comprising approximately 50 members, the squad operates three emergency vehicles and one emergency medic truck, providing 24/7 coverage for the county's emergency needs. In the event of emergencies, patients are transported to Garrett Regional Medical Center or, if necessary, airlifted to UPMC Western Maryland in neighboring Allegany County or WVU Medicine in Morgantown, West Virginia. The squad is primarily funded through alcohol and tobacco revenues, along with private donations and fundraising efforts.

## **CEMETERY**

The Oakland Cemetery is a historic resting place that reflects the rich heritage of the area. Nestled in the scenic landscape of Garrett County, the cemetery serves as a serene and well-maintained site where generations of local families have been laid to rest. It stands as a testament to the community's history, with beautifully preserved headstones and memorials dating back to the Town's early days.

# COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES

## PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

### Action

# 1

**Increase collaboration with the Ruth Enlow Library to enhance awareness of their offerings and encourage greater community utilization of their services.**

The Ruth Enlow Library serves as a vital resource in Garrett County, offering a wide range of programs and services that cater to various age groups and interests. By collaborating with the library, the Town can leverage its existing infrastructure and expertise to deliver more comprehensive services to the community. This collaboration can also provide opportunities for joint events, shared resources, and mutual support, ultimately enhancing the quality of life for residents.

Enhancing collaboration with the Ruth Enlow Library is crucial for fostering a more informed and engaged community. By working together, the Town can increase awareness of the library's diverse offerings, such as educational programs, workshops, and resources, thereby encouraging greater community utilization. This partnership can lead to shared initiatives that address local needs, promote lifelong learning, and strengthen community bonds.

**The Town should continue to take an active approach to:**

- Promote library services and events on the Town website and social media channels.



## Action

# 2 **Seek and actively pursue funding to maintain and enhance Town trails, ensuring resilience against wear, improved visitor guidance, consistent signage, and expanded recreational amenities to foster enjoyment and appreciation of the natural environment.**

Actively seeking and pursuing funding to maintain and enhance Town trails is essential for preserving these valuable community assets. Securing financial support allows for necessary repairs, upgrades, and the addition of new features that improve the overall experience for visitors. With proper funding, trails can be made more resilient to wear and tear, ensuring they remain accessible and safe for future generations. Enhanced signage, including consistent wayfinding and educational markers, can guide visitors and enrich their understanding of the natural environment. Additionally, expanded recreational amenities, such as rest areas and activity zones, promote community engagement and foster a deeper appreciation for local nature. Ultimately, these improvements encourage more people to use and value the trails, contributing to the health, well-being, and environmental stewardship of the community.

### **The Town should continue to take an active approach to:**

- Collaborate with Garrett County and other relevant stakeholders to create a comprehensive maintenance schedule that addresses regular wear and tear, prevents erosion, mitigates damage, and ensures safety. Additionally, work together to install consistent, visually appealing signage across all trails which should include clear directional markers, difficulty ratings, trail etiquette reminders, and interpretive signs that educate visitors on the local flora, fauna, and natural history.
  - Integrate recreational amenities with rest areas with benches, scenic overlook points, picnic spots, and nature play areas for families.
- Collaborate with strategic partners to organize events or activities along the trails, such as guided hikes, nature walks, or community gatherings. Incorporate these events into the marketing strategy to attract both new and returning users. Work with the Health Department which actively participates in events and programming through its GoGarrett campaigns, which can be leveraged to promote trail-based activities.
- Support the Oakland to Herrington Manor Trail which connects the pedestrian network in the Town of Oakland to the trail network in Herrington Manor State Park.





## Action

### **3 Develop a comprehensive marketing strategy to showcase Oakland's unique community assets including its arts and entertainment district, community events, main street, recreation, and others.**

Developing a comprehensive marketing strategy to showcase Oakland's unique community assets is essential for boosting the Town's visibility and drawing in residents, visitors, and potential investors. By focusing on distinctive features, the Town can craft a compelling identity that appeals to a variety of audiences. This strategic approach allows Oakland to not only celebrate its rich cultural and natural heritage but also foster pride and connection among its residents. By creating a unified, engaging brand, Oakland can position itself as a desirable place to live, work, and visit, enhancing its appeal in an increasingly competitive market.

In addition to strengthening the Town's identity, promoting its assets is an important driver of economic growth. A well-executed marketing plan can attract tourists, stimulate business development, and open doors for new investment opportunities. By showcasing what makes Oakland unique, the Town can encourage greater foot traffic to local businesses, raising the profile of Main Street and surrounding areas.

#### **The Town should continue to take an active approach to:**

- Utilize Oakland A&E, Garrett Arts Council, Historical Society & Museum, GOBA, Garrett County, and others to amplify Oakland's cultural and entertainment offerings. Joint campaigns and co-sponsored events can extend reach and attract diverse audiences, while collaboration with tourism entities can position Oakland as a destination for art, entertainment, and community experiences.
- Continue to work with Garrett Council Arts Council to introduce vibrant signage and interactive public art installations along Oakland's main street to create visual interest and photo opportunities for visitors. Consider using QR codes on signs that lead visitors to an online guide or event calendar, making it easy for them to explore all the district offers.
- Work with the Chamber of Commerce to prioritize heritage tourism through a series of different strategic initiatives which could include creating a self-guided heritage trail or map, host or promote annual events and festivals that celebrate local history, crafts, cuisine, and traditions.
- Collaborate with Garrett County tourism and conservation groups to promote Oakland's parks, trails, and waterways. Participate in county-wide tourism initiatives and work with these organizations to include Oakland's sites in regional marketing materials.

## Action

### **4 Leverage partnerships with Historical Society & Museum, Oakland B&O Museum, and other historical organizations to cultivate a strong community appreciation for local history, enhancing cultural awareness and community pride.**

The history of Oakland is an important asset to the Town, offering a deep connection to the past that can strengthen the community's sense of identity and pride. By leveraging partnerships with historical organizations, the Town can cultivate a greater appreciation for its rich history, ensuring that both residents and visitors recognize the value of Oakland's cultural heritage. Collaborative efforts with local historical societies, museums, and heritage groups can help preserve and highlight significant landmarks, events, and stories that define the Town's unique character. Promoting Oakland's historical assets not only enhances cultural awareness but also fosters a stronger sense of community pride, encouraging residents to engage with and celebrate the Town's past while building a foundation for a vibrant future.

#### **The Town should continue to take an active approach to:**

- Promote Oakland's history through social media campaigns, a dedicated web-page, and newsletters, featuring stories, fun facts, and historical photos shared by local partners.
- Work with historical partners on fundraising and awareness campaigns that support the preservation of significant historical sites.
- Promote volunteer opportunities, such as clean-up days or preservation workshops, that allow residents to participate in safeguarding Oakland's heritage.





## Action

# 5

**Enhance and promote recreational opportunities by expanding amenities and activities while also continuing to collaborate with Garrett County to plan and implement projects from the County's Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan (LPPRP) and Program Open Space and introducing new projects and initiatives.**

In 2022, Garrett County adopted the Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan (LPPRP), a comprehensive framework designed to inventory and assess the county's recreational, agricultural, and natural resources. This strategic plan serves as a vital tool for guiding the development and enhancement of parks and recreational facilities throughout the county. For Oakland, collaborating with Garrett County to implement projects outlined in the LPPRP is essential for ensuring that local initiatives align with broader county objectives, thereby maximizing resources and impact.

By working together, Oakland and Garrett County can prioritize and execute projects that address the community's specific needs while contributing to the county's overall vision for land preservation and recreational development. This partnership not only facilitates the efficient use of funding and resources but also fosters a cohesive approach to community development. Additionally, introducing new projects and initiatives tailored to Oakland's unique characteristics can further enhance the Town's appeal and quality of life for residents and visitors alike.

### **The Town should continue to take an active approach to:**

- Explore the expansion of the Armory for use as a multi-functional facility to accommodate community events, sports activities, and other public services.
- Work with local schools, youth organizations, and sports leagues to promote youth sports and recreational programs.
- Identify opportunities for upgrading and modernizing park facilities, including sports fields, playgrounds, and others.
- Foster ongoing collaboration with local organizations, sports clubs, and community groups to align efforts and maximize resources for recreation and park improvements.



## Action

## 6

## **Establish a Capital Improvement Program (CIP) aligned with the Town's Annual Budget to systematically plan, prioritize, and fund public improvement projects over a revolving five-year period.**

A CIP provides a structured approach to managing large-scale projects such as road repairs, park enhancements, facility upgrades, and other community improvements. By creating a roadmap for these projects, the Town can allocate resources more efficiently, avoid unexpected financial shortfalls, and ensure that the most pressing needs are addressed first. It also offers the opportunity for the Town to assess long-term goals and infrastructure needs, while coordinating funding and project timelines to avoid delays or gaps in service. Ultimately, a well-managed CIP improves the Town's ability to plan for future growth, enhances the quality of life for residents, and ensures fiscal responsibility in executing community development initiatives.

### **The Town should continue to take an active approach to:**

- Seek technical assistance from Garrett County establish a CIP to help the Town anticipate funding needs, allocate resources efficiently, and proactively address infrastructure, facilities, and other capital needs.
  - The CIP should provide clear scheduling and phased implementation, guiding decision-making to address the Town's most pressing public improvement needs in an organized manner.

## **Best Management Practices for a CIP**

Implementing best management practices (BMPs) in a CIP is essential for effective infrastructure development and fiscal responsibility. Key BMPs include:

1. **Regular Reserve Studies:** Conduct reserve study updates every three years to align with best practice recommendations, ensuring adequate funding for future projects.
2. **Proactive Maintenance:** Implement a preventive maintenance plan to reduce life cycle costs and enhance property values.
3. **Asset Inventory and Assessment:** Maintain a detailed inventory of assets, including their condition and maintenance history, to inform decision-making.
4. **Stakeholder Engagement:** Involve community members and relevant parties early and often to ensure the CIP aligns with public needs and priorities.
5. **Prioritization and Funding:** Establish clear criteria for project prioritization and identify sustainable funding sources to support the CIP.

## Action

## 7

**Maintain a dynamic calendar of community events while broadening and diversifying options to engage a wider audience and cater to varied community interests.**

This is essential for fostering a vibrant and engaged community in Oakland. While events like Autumn Glory have traditionally been a highlight, diversifying and expanding the range of activities can attract a broader audience and cater to varied interests. By introducing new events and enhancing existing ones, the Town can create opportunities for residents and visitors to connect, celebrate local culture, and participate in shared experiences.

Expanding the variety of community events also offers economic benefits by attracting tourists and supporting local businesses. Events that honor local heritage help foster a strong community identity, creating pride among residents and drawing interest from visitors. Additionally, events can provide a neutral space for different groups to socialize, improving social relations within the community. By prioritizing the expansion and diversification of community events, Oakland can enhance its cultural vibrancy and strengthen community bonds. (See page 78 on examples of community events).

**The Town should continue to take an active approach to:**

- Conduct a survey or host a public forum to gather input on event types, themes, and scheduling preferences. Use this feedback to introduce events that resonate with different age groups, cultural backgrounds, and interests.
- Work with relevant organizations to expand current offerings to include seasonal themes, family-friendly activities, fitness and wellness programs, and events highlighting local arts and talent amongst others. Additionally, increase promotion of events through social media, newsletters, and community bulletin boards, with engaging previews, photos, and testimonials from previous events.
- Gradually introduce new community events at a manageable pace, focusing on smaller-scale gatherings to build interest and participation. Monitor attendance and feedback to adjust the frequency and scale of events, with the goal of increasing participation over time and creating a strong foundation for larger community activities in the future.

## Example For Additional Community Events

Below are examples of additional events that could broaden the range of activities in Oakland and appeal to a diverse audience. These types of events not only provide entertainment but also create opportunities for local businesses and artisans to showcase their products, contributing to the Town's economic development and fostering a deeper sense of community connection.

### January

- Winterfest (snow necessary) - bonfire, sleddings, snow sculptures, s'mores, carriage rides
- Winter picnic in a park

### February

- Valentine Day
- Black History Month
- National Bird Feeding Month - winter bird hike, education on best bird feeding methods for winter

### March

- St. Patrick's Day
- Community Clean-Up Day
- Cultural Food Festival

### April

- Easter Egg Hunt/ Flashlight Egg Hunt
- Easter Bunny Trail Walk
- First Day of Trout - PA Fish Commission presentation
- Earth Day Events

### May

- Mother's Day Activities
- Garden Planting - warm weather crops
- Memorial Day
- River Clean-Up Day

### June

- Flag Day
- Father's Day Activities
- Beginning of Summer - water related activities
- National Fishing Day (Fishing Tournaments)

### July

- 4th of July
- Summer picnic in a park
- Parks & Recreation Month
- Christmas in July

### August

- Geocaching - utilize local businesses or points of interest in the Town
- Back to School

### September

- Labor Day
- National Grandparents Day
- Fall Nature Walks

### October

- Halloween Party
- Haunted Trail
- Costume Contests
- Oktoberfest

### November

- Veterans Day
- Friendsgiving - potluck
- Diwali Celebration (note: this holiday changes depending on the lunar month)
- Warm Clothing Drive

### December

- Holiday Light Scavenger Hunt
- Brunch with Santa
- Hanukkah Celebration
- Kwanzaa Festival



# CHAPTER SEVEN

## TRANSPORTATION



# INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

The transportation chapter focuses on assessing the current transportation infrastructure in Oakland and its surrounding areas, identifying both strengths and areas needing improvement. It provides a look at existing road networks, public transit options, rail service, and air transportation offering insight into how the community moves and interacts with the Town. The chapter also addresses challenges such as congestion, limited connectivity, and gaps in pedestrian and cycling infrastructure, all of which impact mobility. By understanding these challenges, the Town can develop a forward-thinking strategy to improve accessibility, safety, and convenience for all users.

Oakland aims to advocate for a system that supports safe and efficient travel across all modes of transportation. This will focus on upgrading roads, enhancing connectivity between residential, commercial, and recreational areas, and improving traffic flow to reduce congestion. By investing in these improvements, Oakland seeks to build a more connected, multi-modal transportation system that benefits current and future residents while promoting economic growth and sustainability for years to come.

## STATE HIGHWAYS & LOCAL ROADS

In Oakland, the transportation infrastructure includes several key state highways and local roads that facilitate connectivity within the Town and to surrounding areas. The Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) oversees the state's highway system, including roads in and around Oakland. The primary highways serving Oakland are:

- U.S. Route 219 (US 219): This major highway runs through the Town, following Garrett Highway, Oak Street, and Third Street. To the north, US 219 connects to Maryland Route 42, Interstate 68, and U.S. Route 40, along with the Towns of Accident and Grantsville, before passing into Pennsylvania. Heading south, US 219 briefly passes through Mountain Lake Park and connects with U.S. Route 50 before entering West Virginia.
- Maryland Route 39 (MD 39): This state highway heads northwest from Oakland toward West Virginia.
- Maryland Route 135 (MD 135): This highway heads east from Oakland, connecting to Maryland Route 560, Maryland Route 38, and Maryland Route 495.

In addition to these state highways, Oakland features a network of local roads that provide access to residential, commercial, and recreational areas within the Town. The Town of Oakland General Services department maintains 21 and 2/3 miles of roadway (~42 lane miles) within Town limits. The General Services Department oversees paving, striping, and winter operations for the municipal streets.



## PUBLIC TRANSIT

Garrett County is distinctive in that many of its human service programs are consolidated under the Garrett County Community Action Committee (GCCAC). One of the essential services provided by GCCAC is the Garrett Transit Service (GTS), also known as People Movers, which offers general public transportation throughout the county. GTS operates Monday through Friday, from 6:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., and provides services on an as-needed basis. The fleet includes 25 vehicles, ranging from vans to buses, with each vehicle capable of carrying up to 18 passengers.

GTS is dedicated to offering affordable and reliable transportation options for both residents and visitors. All vehicles are equipped to accommodate wheelchairs, and drivers are trained with commercial driver's licenses and appropriate first aid certification. For individuals who require regular transportation to work or appointments, GTS offers a convenient subscription service, allowing for "one-call scheduling," so there's no need to schedule rides daily.

## RAIL SERVICE

The nearest passenger rail service is provided by Amtrak, connecting Washington, D.C., to Chicago with a stop in Cumberland, Maryland. The Cumberland station offers amenities such as an enclosed waiting area and parking facilities. However, it lacks Wi-Fi and accessible platforms. Garrett County is served by two operational CSX rail routes:

- **Keystone Subdivision:** The line runs from Cumberland, Maryland, west to McKeesport, Pennsylvania, (near Pittsburgh)[1] along a former Baltimore and Ohio Railroad (B&O) line. The line includes the well-known Sand Patch Grade over the Allegheny Mountains.[2]
- **Mountain Subdivision:** Running parallel to the Potomac River, this route merges with the Cumberland-Grafton line in Luke and travels through Kitzmiller. It primarily offers lighter service to the local coal mines in the region.

## AIR TRANSPORTATION

Garrett County Airport, situated near McHenry, Maryland, serves as a general aviation facility catering to private charters. The airport features a 5,000-foot asphalt runway, 24 T-hangars, 8 corporate hangars, and a designated parking lot. The most recent Master Plan for the airport was completed in 2015. Future initiatives include hill removal to enhance access to corporate hangars and the development of a taxi ramp connecting to the industrial park.



# TRANSPORTATION

## PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

### Action

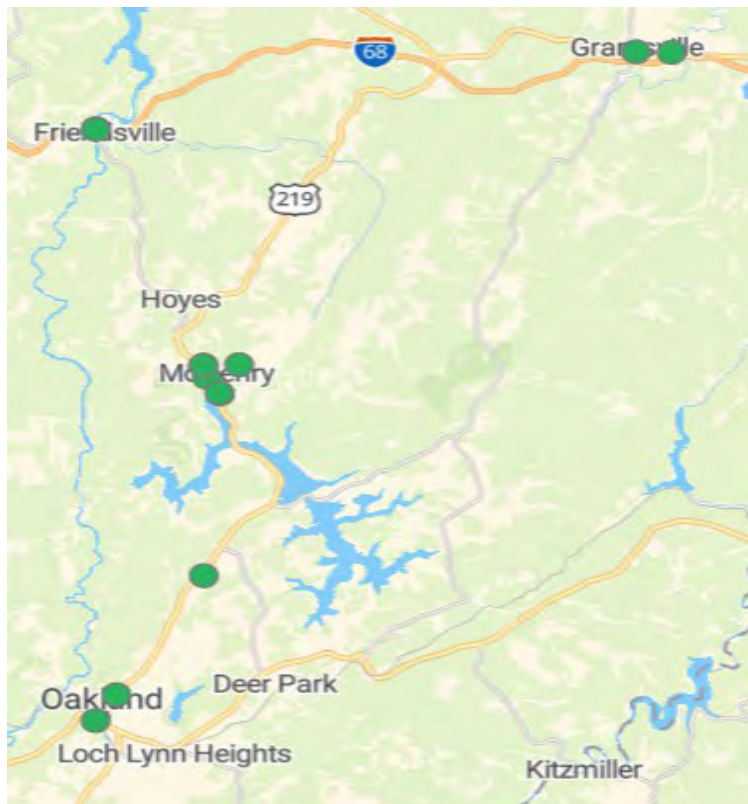
1

Promote the installation of electric vehicle (EV) charging stations throughout Oakland to support sustainable transportation options and accommodate the growing demand for EV infrastructure.

Promoting the expansion of electric vehicle (EV) charging stations throughout Oakland is essential for supporting sustainable transportation and preparing for the growing adoption of EVs. Currently, Oakland has two Level 2 chargers within the Town limits, but increasing this infrastructure will help reduce range anxiety and make EV ownership more practical and accessible for residents and visitors. A well-developed charging network also contributes to environmental sustainability by lowering greenhouse gas emissions and improving air quality. Strategically placing additional charging stations can further attract visitors, boost local economic activity, and establish Oakland as a forward-thinking, eco-friendly community.

#### The Town should continue to take an active approach to:

- Integrate EV charging stations into the design of all new and renovated public and private parking facilities where possible.
- Partner with utility companies, businesses, and property owners to increase EV charging station availability, especially in high-traffic areas, commercial zones, parks, and residential developments.



EV Charging Stations, Courtesy of MDOT

## Action

## 2

**Create and implement a Roadway Maintenance Plan to ensure Oakland's roads are safe, durable, and well-maintained, prioritizing repairs and enhancements based on need, usage, and budget**

Creating and implementing a Roadway Maintenance Plan is essential to keeping Oakland's roads safe, durable, and well-maintained. A structured plan enables the Town to prioritize repairs and improvements based on key factors such as road usage, current conditions, and budget availability. Addressing critical areas first ensures that heavily traveled roads remain functional and safe for motorists, pedestrians, and cyclists alike. Well-maintained roads also help reduce vehicle wear and tear, lowering transportation costs for residents and businesses while improving overall connectivity within the community.

Proactive maintenance extends the lifespan of road infrastructure, preventing small issues from escalating into costly emergency repairs. By planning ahead, the Town can allocate resources more efficiently, minimizing disruptions and maximizing the long-term value of its transportation network. Investing in strategic roadway maintenance not only enhances mobility and safety but also contributes to a more sustainable and fiscally responsible future for Oakland.

**The Town should continue to take an active approach to:**

- Seek technical assistance from engineering firms, Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA), Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) or other regional transportation organizations to help develop the plan.
- Schedule routine inspections to evaluate pavement conditions, drainage, signage, and roadway markings. Use assessment data to identify priority areas for maintenance and improvement.
- Include preventative measures such as crack sealing, pothole patching, and surface treatments to extend the lifespan of roadways and reduce long-term repair costs.
- Conduct an annual review of the Roadway Maintenance Plan to assess its effectiveness, adjust priorities, and incorporate new technologies or practices that can improve roadway quality and safety.



## Action

### **3 Develop an Active Transportation Plan that focuses on creating a comprehensive network of pedestrian-friendly routes.**

By addressing gaps in sidewalks, expanding walking pathways, and enhancing pedestrian infrastructure, along with incorporating dedicated bike lanes, the Town can create a more cohesive network that encourages both walking and biking as viable modes of transportation. Improved walkability and bikeability promote public health by encouraging physical activity, reduce traffic congestion by offering alternatives to driving, and enhance the overall quality of life by making Oakland more navigable for residents of all ages and abilities. Ensuring safe and accessible pedestrian and cycling routes also aligns with broader sustainability goals, reducing reliance on vehicles and lowering environmental impacts.

Investing in pedestrian- and bike-friendly infrastructure not only benefits residents but also supports local businesses and tourism. A well-connected Town encourages foot and bike traffic, increasing economic activity in commercial areas and making Oakland a more attractive destination for visitors. Walkable and bikeable communities are known to foster stronger social connections, as residents are more likely to engage with one another and take advantage of public spaces. Additionally, prioritizing pedestrian safety through improved crosswalks, bike lanes, lighting, and traffic-calming measures enhances the Town's overall appeal and ensures that individuals, including seniors, children, and those with mobility challenges, can move freely and safely.

#### **The Town should continue to take an active approach to:**

- Review existing policies regarding sidewalk maintenance, repairs, and jurisdictional responsibilities to identify gaps or areas for improvement. Ensure clarity on jurisdiction and funding sources for both public and private sidewalks.
- Map and evaluate existing sidewalks, pathways, and crosswalks to identify gaps and prioritize areas with high pedestrian traffic or safety concerns.
- Ensure that all new and improved sidewalks and pathways follow universal design principles, including ADA-compliant curb ramps, tactile indicators, and adequate lighting to accommodate users of all abilities.
- Identify areas for dedicated bike lanes and shared-use pathways that link residential areas with key destinations, such as the school, parks, businesses if feasible.



## Action

## 4 Support public transportation options through the Garrett Transit Service (GTS).

Supporting public transportation options through GTS is vital for ensuring that residents and visitors in Oakland and throughout Garrett County have access to reliable and affordable mobility. Public transit plays a crucial role in connecting individuals to employment, healthcare, education, and essential services, particularly for those who do not have access to personal vehicles. By supporting and promoting GTS, the Town can help reduce transportation barriers, enhance economic opportunities, and improve the overall quality of life for residents. A strong public transit system strengthens community connectivity, fosters economic growth, and reinforces Oakland's commitment to an accessible and well-integrated transportation infrastructure.

### The Town should continue to take an active approach to:

- Collaborate with Garrett County to enhance support for the Garrett Transit Service.
- Launch public awareness campaigns to promote the Garrett Transit Service, highlighting its benefits and encouraging greater community utilization.
- Collaborate to explore options for expanding transit routes, increasing service frequency, and improving accessibility for seniors and individuals with disabilities.



**Action****5****Collaborate actively with Garrett County, State Highway Administration (SHA), and Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) to align transportation priorities.**

The Town can leverage existing resources, expertise, and funding opportunities to improve traffic flow, address freight and truck traffic challenges, and implement strategic roadway enhancements. Coordinated efforts help to identify and address key transportation concerns, ensuring that roadways remain efficient, safe, and well-maintained. Increased signage, optimized traffic patterns, and improved intersections can enhance navigation, reduce congestion, and create a smoother travel experience for residents, businesses, and visitors alike.

Strengthening regional connectivity through these partnerships also supports economic growth and accessibility. A well-integrated transportation system facilitates easier movement of goods and services, benefiting local businesses and attracting new investments. Additionally, prioritizing safety measures such as better lighting, pedestrian infrastructure, and roadway maintenance ensures that Oakland remains an accessible and secure place for all travelers, including cyclists and pedestrians.

**The Town should continue to take an active approach to:**

- Partner with SHA and MDOT to conduct a comprehensive review of current traffic patterns, congestion points, and safety concerns in key areas, especially those impacting regional connectivity and freight movement.
- Collaborate with MDOT and SHA to design strategies that manage freight and truck traffic effectively, reducing congestion and improving safety on local roads and highways.
- Align transportation priorities and integrate regional planning efforts, ensuring that projects complement one another and support broader community and economic development goals.

## Action

## 6

**Collaborate with CSX to enhance safety, signage, and lighting infrastructure along railroad tracks.**

Rail corridors intersect with roadways and pedestrian pathways in Oakland, so it is critical to implement clear signage, adequate lighting, and advanced safety measures to prevent accidents and enhance visibility. Improved infrastructure can help reduce the risk of collisions, provide better guidance for motorists and pedestrians, and create a safer environment for residents and visitors. Strengthening this partnership with CSX will allow Oakland to proactively address potential hazards and create a safer, more connected Town.

**The Town should continue to take an active approach to:**

- Reach out to CSX representatives to begin discussions on safety and lighting upgrades in Oakland, focusing on high-risk areas, especially near railroad crossings and pedestrian pathways.
- Provide educational materials to raise awareness about safety concerns near active railroad crossings.





A group of people are kayaking on a calm lake. In the foreground, a yellow kayak with three people is moving across the water. To the left, another group is near a white kayak. The background features a dense line of trees and a tall antenna tower under a grey, overcast sky. The water reflects the light from the sky.

# **CHAPTER EIGHT**

## **NATURAL RESOURCES**

# INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

## Natural Resources. Mineral Resources, Areas of Critical State Concern, and Sensitive Areas

The Natural Resources chapter provides an overview of the environmental assets that define the Town of Oakland, including its hydrology, wetlands, soils, topography, mineral resources, and prime agricultural lands. These natural characteristics form the foundation of Oakland's rich environmental heritage, significantly contributing to the Town's identity, ecological balance, and quality of life for residents. Protecting these resources is essential to maintaining the Town's scenic beauty, supporting biodiversity, and ensuring sustainable land use practices. By recognizing the importance of these natural features, Oakland can make informed decisions that balance growth while preserving the Town's environmental integrity.

This chapter also outlines key action items aimed at safeguarding critical environmental areas and ensuring they remain protected from development pressures. By identifying and preserving areas of critical concern, the Town can prevent ecological degradation, mitigate the impacts of urban expansion, and promote responsible land management. Thoughtful planning and redevelopment strategies will help guide future growth in a way that respects and enhances the Town's natural resources, ensuring that Oakland remains a vibrant and sustainable community for generations to come.

### Hydrology

Oakland is situated within the Youghiogheny River watershed, a significant tributary of the Monongahela River. The Town's hydrology is characterized by the presence of Broadford Lake and the Youghiogheny River, which serve as the primary sources of drinking water for the community. Broadford Lake was created in 1971 and has since been integral to the Town's water supply system. Additionally, the Deep Creek Dam, located approximately 8 miles north of Oakland, impounds the Youghiogheny River to form Deep Creek Lake. The dam not only contributes to the local water supply but also supports hydroelectric power generation and recreational activities.

A designated Maryland State Scenic and Wild River, the portion of the Youghiogheny located on the west side Oakland and all land visible from the river are protected, and any uses within this area are regulated by the State of Maryland. This portion of the Youghiogheny is considered a stronghold watershed for several aquatic rare, threatened, and endangered species. Two major tributaries, including Bear Creek and Minnow Creek, are designated cold water streams (Use Class IIIP).

## **WETLANDS**

Wetlands are transitional areas situated between permanently flooded deepwater environments and well-drained uplands, where the water table is typically at or near the surface, or the land is covered by shallow water. The Oakland area is home to an estimated 60 acres of wetlands, both within Town limits and in the surrounding areas. These wetlands include various types such as Freshwater Emergent Wetlands, Freshwater Ponds, and Freshwater Forested/Shrub Wetlands, all contributing to the area's rich biodiversity and environmental health.

## **100 YEAR FLOODPLAIN**

Floodplains, particularly those susceptible to severe flooding—known as the 100-Year Floodplains—offer valuable natural resources and recreational open spaces. These areas, located alongside streams and rivers, are typically flat and become inundated with water during heavy rainfall or flooding events. Due to the high risk of flooding, development in these regions is not advisable. The floodplains in Oakland are associated with the Youghiogheny River, Little Youghiogheny, Bradley Run, and an unnamed tributary. The Town of Oakland follows the floodplain management guidelines established by Garrett County.

## **HABITATS OF RARE, THREATENED & ENDANGERED SPECIES**

The area along the Little Youghiogheny River in Oakland has been recognized as a habitat supporting rare, threatened, or endangered species. This region is part of the Youghiogheny River watershed, which is known for its rich biodiversity and the presence of such species.

## **CLIMATE**

Oakland experiences a humid continental climate characterized by cold winters and warm, humid summers. Average temperatures range from a low of 18°F (-8°C) in January to a high of 77°F (25°C) in July. Snowfall is common during the winter months, with an average annual snowfall of approximately 107 inches (272 cm). Precipitation is heaviest in the spring and summer, with July being the wettest month, averaging 4.57 inches (116 mm) of rainfall.

## **TOPOGRAPHY**

With an elevation of approximately 2,405 feet (733 meters), the Town's topography features rolling hills and gentle slopes, characteristic of the Appalachian Plateau region. The surrounding landscape includes forested areas, wetlands, and water bodies, contributing to the area's rich biodiversity. The varied terrain supports diverse ecosystems and offers recreational opportunities such as hiking, fishing, and boating.



## SOILS

The soils in Oakland and its surrounding areas belong to the Calvin-Gilpin-Dekalb Soil Association. This association comprises gently sloping to steep, moderately deep, well-drained soils formed over red to gray acid shale and sandstone rocks. These soils are predominantly non-stony and are well-suited for various land uses, including residential and commercial development. The area consists mainly of moderately sloping soils with some steep areas; on crests and broad summits, the soils are gently sloping. Most soils in this association provide very good building sites.

For more detailed information on specific soil types and their locations within the county, the Soil Conservation Service has made available detailed soils maps for the entire County, indicating the locations of each specific soil type.

## PRIME AGRICULTURAL LANDS

The United States Department of Agriculture defines Prime Agricultural Land as land with the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops. While the Town of Oakland does not contain any prime agricultural lands within its limits, there are agricultural lands to the north and south of the Town.

## MINERAL RESOURCES

The primary mineral resource is crushed stone, produced by Maryland Minerals Inc. at their quarry on Quarry Road, supplying materials for roads, drainage, and construction. Regarding energy, Oakland Oil & Propane is a wholesale supplier of petroleum products, delivering propane, gasoline, diesel, heating oil, and lubricants across multiple states. While these companies handle energy and construction materials, there are no active gas drilling operations in the Town.

## SENSITIVE AREAS

The map below highlights floodplains identified by the Maryland Department of the Environment, showing areas at risk of flooding in the region. These designated zones are crucial for assessing flood risk and guiding land use planning and development decisions.



Oakland Floodplains, Map Courtesy of: Maryland Department of Environment

## Mountain Maryland Gateway to the West Heritage Area

The Town of Oakland has officially endorsed the Mountain Maryland Gateway to the West Heritage Area, supporting its development as a State Certified Heritage Area. By incorporating the applicable segments of the Mountain Maryland Gateway to the West Heritage Area Management Plan by reference, the Town ensures that the Management Plan serves as the guiding document for activities supported by Heritage Program incentives.

In the late 18th and 19th centuries, the Mountain Maryland Gateway to the West Heritage Area was a crucial entry point to America's western frontier, playing a significant role in its opening and development. This region is celebrated for its exceptional natural beauty, rich cultural heritage, and notable transportation history, reflecting its storied past.

Today, the Mountain Maryland Gateway to the West Heritage Area is recognized as one of Maryland's 13 state-certified heritage areas. Operating under the auspices of the Garrett County Chamber of Commerce, it is dedicated to promoting heritage tourism throughout the region, ensuring that its historical significance and natural splendor continue to be appreciated by residents and visitors alike.





# NATURAL RESOURCES

## PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

### Action

1

**Continue to collaborate with Garrett County to review existing guidelines and regulations ensure continued alignment with best practices in environmental protection and land use management.**

The Town of Oakland already has established regulations addressing Steep Slopes, Stream Buffers, and Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Species within its Zoning Ordinance. Specifically:

- **Steep Slopes (Section 300-37):** Guidelines are in place to regulate development on slopes exceeding certain thresholds to minimize landscape disturbance and ensure responsible construction practices.
- **Stream Buffers (Section 300-38):** Requirements for setbacks from streams are established to protect water quality, prevent erosion, and support healthy aquatic ecosystems.
- **Rare Species (Section 300-40):** Protections are established to safeguard areas identified as habitats for rare, threatened, or endangered species, promoting biodiversity and ecological health.

By reinforcing existing standards and enhancing collaboration with Garrett County, Oakland can ensure that growth and development occur responsibly, balancing environmental protection with community needs. This collaboration fosters a responsible approach to growth, balancing development needs with environmental conservation.

### **The Town should continue to take an active approach to:**

- Conduct a review of Sections 300-37, 300-38, and 300-40 to ensure the standards are clear, enforceable, and effectively address conservation objectives.
- Strengthen monitoring and compliance measures to ensure adherence to established guidelines.
- Where appropriate, coordinate with County officials to harmonize efforts in protecting sensitive areas, especially when development impacts may extend beyond Town boundaries.
- Continue to educate developers, landowners, and the public about the importance of these regulations and the potential risks associated with developing sensitive areas.



## Action

# 2 **Conduct a comprehensive assessment of existing buffers along water bodies, waterways, and flood zones.**

This is essential for effective environmental management and community safety.

Riparian buffers—vegetated zones adjacent to rivers and streams—play a crucial role in filtering pollutants, reducing erosion, and providing habitat for wildlife. Assessing these areas helps identify their current effectiveness in protecting water quality and guiding necessary restoration or enhancement efforts.

Similarly, evaluating floodplain buffers is vital for mitigating flood risks. Floodplains naturally absorb and convey floodwaters, reducing the impact of floods on surrounding areas. By assessing these zones, communities can develop informed strategies to manage flood risks, protect infrastructure, and preserve natural habitats.

### **The Town should continue to take an active approach to:**

- Identify areas where current buffers may be insufficient or degraded, allowing the Town to implement targeted improvements that enhance water quality, reduce flood risks, and protect vital ecosystems.
- Work with property owners to establish, maintain, and expand forest buffers in linear wooded areas along rivers and streams to help filter nutrients, sediments, and other pollutants in runoff.



## Action

### **3 Leverage Oakland's natural resources and scenic landscapes to promote eco-tourism and outdoor recreation, which can boost the local economy while fostering environmental stewardship.**

The Town of Oakland boasts a wealth of outdoor recreational assets and tourism opportunities that are integral to its local economy and community identity. The Town's scenic landscapes, including the Youghiogheny River and Broadford Lake, offer a variety of activities such as hiking, fishing, boating, and wildlife observation. These natural attractions draw visitors seeking authentic outdoor experiences, thereby supporting local businesses and generating revenue. In fact, tourism driven by the presence of the Mountain Maryland Gateway to the West Heritage Area contributes approximately \$152.1 million annually to the region's economy.

Leveraging Oakland's natural resources to promote eco-tourism and outdoor recreation not only boosts the local economy but also fosters environmental stewardship. By highlighting sustainable tourism practices, the Town can attract environmentally conscious visitors and encourage the preservation of its natural habitats. Initiatives like the "Make It in the Mountains" campaign, a collaborative effort between Garrett and Allegany counties, aim to raise awareness of the region's strengths, driving both business investment and tourism. This approach ensures that economic growth aligns with the conservation of Oakland's unique environmental assets, promoting a balanced relationship between development and nature.

#### **The Town should continue to take an active approach to:**

- Promote and market current eco-friendly tourism opportunities, such as hiking, birdwatching, and kayaking, while partnering with local businesses to create eco-tourism packages that showcase the Town's natural attractions.
- Ensure that tourism development is environmentally sustainable and does not compromise sensitive areas.
  - Encourage eco-friendly practices among local businesses, such as using renewable resources, minimizing waste, and promoting conservation efforts.
  - Raise awareness among residents and tourists about the importance of protecting natural resources and the environment.



## Action

## 4

**Promote collaboration with the Broadford Lake Watershed Committee.**

Maintaining and improving Broadford Lake is vital for preserving its ecological health, enhancing recreational opportunities, and ensuring a sustainable water supply for Oakland. As a 140-acre area, Broadford Lake offers diverse habitats, including submerged stumps, lily pads, and flats, which support various fish species and contribute to the lake's biodiversity.

Collaborating with the Broadford Lake Watershed Committee is essential for effective management and conservation efforts. This committee focuses on addressing nutrient levels, particularly phosphorus, to prevent algal blooms and maintain water quality. By working together, stakeholders can implement strategies to protect the lake's health, support recreational activities, and ensure the long-term sustainability of this valuable resource.

**The Town should continue to take an active approach to:**

- Actively involve the Broadford Lake Watershed Committee in Town planning processes to address water quality, infrastructure, and community use of Broadford Lake. Ensure representation from key stakeholders such as the Garrett County, local conservation districts, and relevant state agencies are involved.
- Review and assess the implementation of the committee's recommendations, including water quality monitoring and dam safety initiatives, by aligning Town resources and planning efforts.

**Broadford Lake Watershed Committee**

As of June 2023, the leadership/facilitator role for the Broadford Lake Watershed Committee was transferred from Maryland Department of Environment to the Western Maryland Resource Conservation and Development Council (WMRC&D). WMRC&D's role as facilitator will serve to encourage cooperative agreement on managing the water quality of Broadford Lake moving forward.

The following factors made forming this Committee a priority:

- The occurrence of harmful algal blooms (HABs) in Broadford Lake
- The importance of maintaining Broadford Lake's water supply intake
- Past beach closures due to water quality issues
- Broadford Lake's recreational value for local residents and the lake's sport fishery
- The area being an underserved community (the watershed is not in the Chesapeake Bay drainage and has historically received less attention from the State)
- Dam infrastructure concerns, including resilience to extreme weather events (The dam is 51 years old and was designed with a 50-year lifespan)

## Action

# 5

## **Develop and implement a Comprehensive Lake Management Plan for Broadford Lake.**

A Lake Management Plan is a strategic document that outlines goals and actions to improve and protect the desired conditions of a lake. It serves as a comprehensive guide for managing various aspects of the lake's ecosystem, including water quality, habitat preservation, recreational use, and community engagement. The plan typically involves assessing current conditions, identifying issues, setting objectives, and developing specific management strategies to address challenges and enhance the lake's health and usability.

Creating a Lake Management Plan for Broadford Lake is crucial for preserving the ecological health, water quality, and recreational value of the lake. A well-crafted management plan also facilitates informed decision-making, enabling the community to respond proactively to emerging challenges. It would serve as a valuable tool for securing funding and support for conservation initiatives. Additionally, the plan can help guide sustainable recreational activities, balancing human use with environmental preservation.

### **The Town should continue to take an active approach to:**

- Develop a Lake Management Plan in collaboration with the Broadford Lake Watershed Committee, Garrett County, and other key stakeholders. This plan should include:
  - Establish a long-term monitoring program to track water quality indicators, especially phosphorus levels and harmful algal blooms.
  - Define roles and responsibilities for local stakeholders to actively participate in water quality improvement initiatives.
  - Include provisions for adaptive management to respond to new challenges and opportunities as they arise, such as changes in land use or climate impacts.

# MINERAL RESOURCES

## PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

### Action

# 1

### **Ensure compliance with regulations set by the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE).**

Regulations covering petroleum storage tanks, solid waste disposal, hazardous waste management, brownfield cleanup, and mining are designed to prevent pollution, mitigate environmental hazards, and promote responsible land use. By adhering to these guidelines, the Town can safeguard its natural resources, prevent contamination of soil and water, and reduce risks associated with improper waste handling. Proactive compliance also helps Oakland avoid legal penalties, costly remediation efforts, and potential harm to residents and local ecosystems.

Regularly reviewing and understanding MDE's specific requirements and compliance obligations ensures that Town officials, businesses, and property owners are aware of their responsibilities. By staying up to date with state regulations and implementing best practices, Oakland can enhance public health, support sustainable development, and demonstrate a strong commitment to environmental stewardship.

#### **The Town should continue to take an active approach to:**

- Regularly review and understand the specific requirements and compliance obligations outlined by MDE.

### **Maryland Department of Environment (MDE)**

MDE is dedicated to protecting and restoring the state's air, water, and land resources, ensuring the health and well-being of all Marylanders. Established in 1987, MDE enforces environmental laws and regulations, conducts long-term planning and research, and offers technical assistance to industries and communities addressing pollution, growth challenges, and environmental emergencies. The department is organized into key administrations, including Air and Radiation, Land and Materials, Water and Science, and Operational Services, each focusing on specific environmental aspects. MDE provides various resources, such as technical guidance documents, regulatory information, and public outreach programs, to support environmental stewardship and compliance across the state.



## Action

# 2

### **Evaluate the potential environmental, health, legal, and economic impacts of hydraulic fracturing in the Town and determine the feasibility of adopting an ordinance to ban fracking within Town limits.**

The distribution of mineral resources in Garrett County is documented in the County's Comprehensive Plan, highlighting areas where natural resource extraction is feasible. While Oakland possesses mineral resources, their extraction does not align with the Town's small-town character, tourism-driven economy, or environmental priorities. Extractive industries, such as mining, could disrupt the scenic and recreational appeal that attracts visitors and supports local businesses. Additionally, resource extraction activities may introduce noise, air pollution, and heavy truck traffic, which could negatively impact residents' quality of life.

Evaluating the potential impacts of hydraulic fracturing (fracking) is essential to ensure that Oakland's natural resources are managed responsibly. Fracking has been associated with risks such as groundwater contamination, habitat disruption, and increased seismic activity. Given these concerns, the Town should assess the feasibility of adopting an ordinance to ban fracking within Town limits. This approach would help safeguard the community's water supply, maintain environmental integrity, and uphold Oakland's commitment to sustainable development and responsible land use. (See an example of Friendsville's Ordinance in the appendices)

#### **The Town should continue to take an active approach to:**

- Partner with Maryland Department of Environment, environmental scientists, health professionals, legal advisors, and economists to evaluate the potential impacts of hydraulic fracturing in the Town of Oakland.
  - Based on findings, determine whether an ordinance banning fracking is necessary and feasible, and draft regulations or policies to protect the Town if needed.



# **CHAPTER NINE**

## **WATER RESOURCES**

# INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

The Water Resources chapter examines the current state of Oakland's water supply and sewage systems, assessing their capacity, condition, and ability to meet future demands. This chapter provides an overview of existing infrastructure, identifying key areas for improvement to maintain efficiency and sustainability. Analyzing factors such as water treatment capabilities, distribution networks, and sewage management, ensures that Oakland's utilities remain reliable. In addition to evaluating current systems, the chapter outlines priority recommendations to enhance water quality, upgrade infrastructure, and address potential environmental concerns. These recommendations focus on ensuring that all residents have access to clean, dependable water sources while supporting responsible growth and development.

## Water Supply

Oakland sources its water from Broadford Lake and the Youghiogheny River. The two treatment plants have a combined permitted appropriation of 590,000 gallons per day (gpd), allocating 420,000 gpd from Broadford Lake and 170,000 gpd from the Youghiogheny River. Currently, the average daily demand is approximately 377,000 gpd from Broadford Lake and 45,000 gpd from the Youghiogheny River. While the system's capacity is sufficient to meet current and projected growth through 2033, the Town will monitor average daily withdrawals to ensure the appropriation limit remains adequate as new development occurs. Additionally, plans are in place for several service area expansions in the coming years.

The Oakland water system is interconnected with the Mountain Lake/Loch Lynn system, enabling the County to purchase water during low-flow periods or emergencies. The system serves not only the incorporated Town but also significant areas outside its limits. Recent improvements have been made to both the Oakland and Broadford plants, as well as the distribution network. However, challenges persist, including aging equipment, valves, and water lines, along with a lack of backup power sources at the Oakland Plant and intake.

## Sewerage

Oakland operates its own wastewater system and treatment plant (WWTP) on the Little Youghiogheny River. The plant, with a permitted capacity of 900,000 gallons per day (gpd) and an average daily flow (ADF) of 423,000 gpd in 2019, uses a combination grit chamber and aerated lagoons for treatment. Effluent is discharged into the Youghiogheny River. Both rivers are designated as Use III-P waters, subject to specific water quality standards.

Ongoing discussions between the Town and Garrett County have focused on merging the Oakland WWTP with the Trout Run WWTP, which has a capacity of 900,000 gallons per day gpd. An agreement has been reached, and they are now awaiting additional funding to support the construction of a new 1.8 million gpd Sequencing Batch Reactor (SBR) WWTP at the Oakland site. Although there is a significant funding gap, construction is scheduled to be completed by 2026.



# WATER RESOURCES

## PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

### Action

# 1

### **Support the County's efforts in the development of a new wastewater treatment plant**

The Town of Oakland and Garrett County have been in discussions for several years regarding the consolidation of the Oakland WWTP and the Trout Run WWTP. Under the proposed plan, the new plant would be owned and operated by the County, while the Town would maintain ownership and operation of the existing collection and conveyance system serving the Town. A new sewer line will be extended from the Trout Run system to serve the Rosedale area and residences along Shaffer Hill Road, west of Route 39, which currently face issues with failing septic systems.

A tentative agreement has been reached with the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) to use Bay Restoration Funds for approximately 76% of the cost of the new combined WWTP. However, there remains a \$12 million funding gap. To address this, the County is collaborating with the USDA and the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development for Community Development Block Grants (CDBG).

#### **The Town should continue to take an active approach to:**

- Work with the County to replace two existing, lagoon wastewater treatment facilities with a new regional facility that will treat wastewater to enhanced nutrient removal standards and address areas with compromised septic systems.

## Action

# 2

**Continue to coordinate with the County to ensure that any extensions and increases of the capacity of the water systems, along with any projects, are included in the Garrett County Water and Sewerage Master Plan (W&S Plan).**

The W&S Plan serves as a comprehensive framework for managing and developing water and sewer systems across the county. By aligning local projects with this countywide plan, the Town can ensure that their infrastructure improvements are integrated into broader regional strategies, preventing fragmentation and promoting a more cohesive and efficient system of water management.

Incorporating these projects into the W&S Plan also helps secure funding and resources from state and federal programs, which often require projects to be part of an approved plan. This inclusion not only boosts the Town's chances of accessing financial support but also ensures that projects are compliant with state and federal regulations, streamlining the permitting process. Furthermore, by planning in conjunction with the county, the Town can better anticipate future growth and population increases, ensuring that water systems are upgraded in a way that supports long-term sustainability, public health, and environmental protection.

### **The Town should continue to take an active approach to:**

- Ensure the Broadford and Oakland (Youghiogheny) Water Plants and the Oakland (Youghiogheny) Intake Facility, have continuous water service during times of power outages.
- Continue to Implement digital mapping of the water and wastewater distribution systems to enhance operational efficiency, maintenance, and repairs.
- Explore the expansion of water services on the west side of Oakland to support future growth and development as well as installing a new water tower to improve water pressure and reliability.

## Action

## 3

### **Continue to conduct comprehensive system-wide repairs and rehabilitation efforts, with a focus on modernizing outdated components and planning for future system resilience.**

Over time, infrastructure components can degrade or become outdated, leading to inefficiencies, increased maintenance costs, and potential service disruptions. By focusing on modernizing these components, municipalities can address these issues. These improvements also help extend the life cycle of existing infrastructure, delaying the need for more expensive, large-scale replacements.

Planning for future system resilience is equally important as it allows communities to proactively address challenges such as population growth, climate change, and evolving regulatory requirements. A resilient water and sewer system is better equipped to handle extreme weather events, increased demand, and changing environmental conditions, reducing vulnerability and ensuring continued service even in the face of unforeseen circumstances. This forward-thinking approach also helps communities stay ahead of emerging issues, and safeguard public health and the environment.

#### **The Town should continue to take an active approach to:**

- Identify critical areas where line upgrades and replacements are needed.
  - Prioritize the replacement of aging water lines, valves, pumps, and motors across the water plant to reduce the risk of failures, water loss, and costly emergency repairs. Track assets and infrastructure life cycles, ensuring replacements are proactively scheduled to maximize system longevity.
  - Plan for future replacements and upgrades to water and sewer systems to address normal wear and tear to continue expansion opportunities to ensure that quality and quantity of water meets necessary requirements.
- Evaluate the need for algae control systems in treatment plants to improve water treatment efficiency and quality.



## Action

# 4

### **Collaborate with Garrett County and support local agencies to protect water quality in Broadford Lake and the Youghiogheny River Watershed, ensuring the health of these vital water resources for the community and the environment.**

Protecting water quality in Broadford Lake and the Youghiogheny River Watershed is essential for safeguarding public health, preserving biodiversity, and supporting the local economy. Broadford Lake serves multiple purposes, including recreational activities, drinking water supply, and flood control. However, nutrient levels have raised concerns about algal blooms, which can affect water quality and aquatic life. Addressing these issues through proactive management and conservation efforts is vital to maintain the lake's ecological balance and the well-being of the community.

Similarly, the Youghiogheny River Watershed is a critical resource that supports diverse ecosystems and provides recreational opportunities. Monitoring and improving water quality in this watershed are necessary to prevent pollution-related problems, such as eutrophication and habitat degradation. Collaborative efforts to protect these water bodies ensure that they continue to meet the needs of the community and the environment, now and in the future.

#### **The Town should continue to take an active approach to:**

- Continue to conduct regular monitoring by establishing a routine water quality monitoring program to assess key indicators such as nutrient levels, pH, turbidity, and bacteria counts.
- Work with Garrett County to educate local landowners and businesses on best management practices for reducing runoff and pollution, such as proper fertilizer application, erosion control measures, and the establishment of buffer zones along the lake and streams.
- Ensure proper waste management practices in the community to prevent illegal dumping and pollution of waterways. This could include conducting regular clean-up events and providing resources for proper disposal of hazardous materials and pollutants.



## Action

### **5 Work with Garrett County to develop climate-resilient water resource strategies to address potential droughts, heavy rainfall events, and other climate-related challenges. Also, incorporate climate projections into water management planning to ensure sustainable resources for the future.**

As climate patterns become increasingly unpredictable, communities face the dual threat of both droughts and heavy rainfall events. Droughts can reduce water availability, while heavy rainfall can lead to flooding and overwhelm infrastructure. By developing strategies to address these extremes, the Town can ensure that its water systems are prepared for a range of potential climate-related challenges, reducing the risk of service disruptions and protecting both public health and the environment.

Incorporating climate projections into water management planning is also crucial for ensuring sustainable water resources for the future. Climate projections can provide valuable insights into anticipated changes in temperature, precipitation patterns, and water availability, allowing communities to better plan for long-term challenges. This forward-looking approach helps prioritize investments in infrastructure, conservation measures, and management practices that will safeguard water resources against future climate impacts. By collaborating with the county on these strategies, the Town can contribute to a region-wide effort to enhance resilience and ensure the sustainability of water resources for future generations.

#### **The Town should continue to take an active approach to:**

- Create a long-term plan that addresses water management under various climate scenarios, including drought response, flood preparedness, and other emergency situations.





# **CHAPTER TEN**

## **IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS & PLAN**



# OVERALL IMPLEMENTATION

The successful implementation of the Comprehensive Plan will require ongoing dedication and collaboration from the Town and its partners. To achieve its goals, the Town should take the following steps to ensure steady progress and long-term success.

- The Planning Commission or a dedicated Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee should be assigned to oversee the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. While not responsible for directly carrying out actions, this group will initiate tasks and coordinate efforts with agencies, volunteers, Town staff, local organizations, and other stakeholders to ensure progress. Their role will be to facilitate collaboration and guide implementation efforts without assuming direct responsibility for execution.
- Priority implementation projects should be submitted as part of the Town's budget discussions. Any projects requiring municipal approval or funding should be presented to the Mayor and Town Council well in advance, allowing sufficient time for review and deliberation. Proper planning and communication will help secure the necessary resources and support for successful implementation.
- The Town should conduct an annual evaluation of the Comprehensive Plan's implementation, documenting progress made toward achieving the Town's vision and community development objectives. This review should include recommendations for potential modifications and be submitted to the Mayor and Town Council. The annual update should be appended to the Plan document, creating a continuous record of accomplishments and adjustments over time.
- The Town should actively collaborate with the County and the State of Maryland, including all relevant agencies, to ensure that priorities are aligned, and efforts are effectively coordinated. Seamless collaboration will help streamline initiatives, maximize resources, and enhance the overall impact of projects. By establishing clear communication channels and fostering cooperative relationships, the Town can work more efficiently with State and County partners to achieve shared goals and address community needs.

# TARGETED AREAS FOR INVESTMENT

The targeted areas for investment map (Map 7) is a crucial tool for guiding the Town of Oakland's future development. It acts as a blueprint, promoting efficient and sustainable land use by designating specific purposes for different areas within the Town. This strategic allocation helps organize spaces effectively, prevents conflicting land uses, and encourages development patterns that are environmentally and socially responsible.

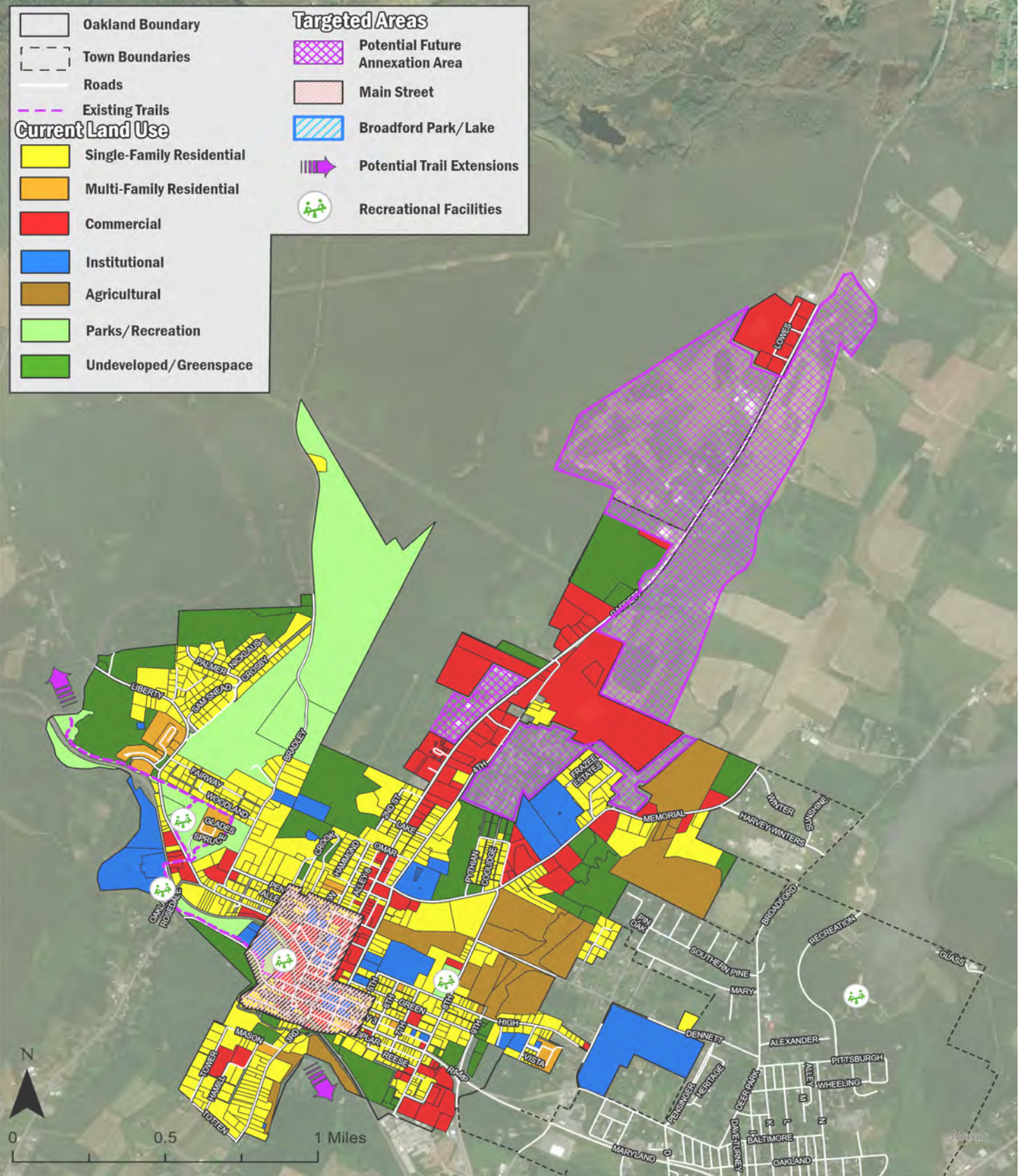
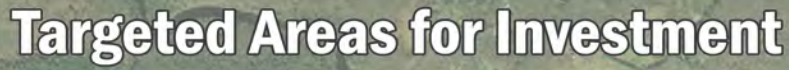
By translating the policies from Comprehensive Plans into actionable strategies, the map informs decisions on zoning regulations and infrastructure investments. It identifies where residential, commercial, industrial, and recreational developments should occur, ensuring that growth aligns with the Town's long-term objectives. This alignment is vital for coordinated and purposeful development.

Additionally, this plays a significant role in infrastructure planning by highlighting areas designated for specific land uses, which guides the development of roads, utilities, and public services. It also contributes to environmental protection by marking conservation zones, ensuring that natural resources are preserved amidst development. This lays the groundwork for economic development initiatives by identifying prime areas for business and industry, thereby attracting investment and job opportunities. The process of creating and updating the map fosters community engagement, as it involves residents in planning decisions, reflecting their needs and aspirations.

Targeted Areas for Investment include:

- **Potential Future Annexation Areas:** This involves identifying areas to fill existing gaps around the Town, including Mitchell Manor. Additionally, consider areas along the commercial corridor on Route 219 as a secondary focus.
- **Main Street:** This area aims to enhance Main Street to foster a vibrant downtown filled with a diverse range of businesses and events.
- **Broadford Park/Lake:** This identifies a need to continue to improve drinking water quality and enhance park amenities.
- **Potential Trail Connection:** This encourages the development and extension of trails to improve connectivity and walkability.
- **Recreational Facilities:** This aims to build upon the existing recreational assets and continue providing excellent recreational opportunities.

### Map 7: Targeted Areas for Investment





# IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

The Implementation Matrix in the following pages provides a comprehensive overview of all priority recommendations, along with the necessary supporting information for each. This structured format ensures that all recommendations are easily accessible in one centralized location, allowing for efficient reference and implementation.

## LAND USE/ZONING

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS	PARTNERS	COST	FUNDING SOURCES	TIMEFRAME
Identify and evaluate various locations for potential annexation	Garrett County Department of Planning and Land Management; Property Owners	Staff Time	N/A	Ongoing
Proactively encourage the redevelopment and reuse of vacant and blighted properties.	Garrett County Department of Planning and Land Management; Property Owners; Developers; Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development	Dependent on Specific Projects	CDBG; NSP; DHCD	Ongoing
Prioritize improving current zoning standards to facilitate creative property reuse and future development needs.	Garrett County Department of Planning and Land Management	Staff Time	N/A	Ongoing
Review existing zoning regulations that may impede the development of lodging accommodations, while analyzing the advantages and disadvantages of various diverse lodging opportunities.	Garrett County Department of Planning and Land Management; General Public; Business Owners	Staff Time	N/A	Short Term (1 to 3 years)
Collaborate with Garrett County to enhance code enforcement efforts by establishing clear communication channels, sharing resources, and developing a unified strategy to address code violations effectively.	Garrett County Department of Planning and Land Management; Property Owners	Staff Time	N/A	Ongoing

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS	PARTNERS	COST	FUNDING SOURCES	TIMEFRAME
Enhance and expand the coordinated effort for monthly or quarterly meetings among the Town, Greater Oakland Business Association, Garrett County, and the Garrett County Chamber of Commerce to strengthen regional collaboration and work towards common goals/interests.	Garrett County Economic Development; Garrett County Chamber of Commerce and Visitor's Center; Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development; Greater Oakland Business Association	Staff Time	N/A	Short Term (1 to 3 years)
Strategically identify and attract industries and businesses that complement existing ones while addressing any gaps in the market.	Garrett County Economic Development; Garrett County Chamber of Commerce and Visitor's Center; Greater Oakland Business Association; Local Businesses; General Public	Staff Time	N/A	Ongoing
Organize more community events in collaboration with local businesses, Garrett County, and the Chamber of Commerce to stimulate retail and dining sales while increasing foot traffic.	Garrett County Economic Development; Garrett County Chamber of Commerce and Visitor's Center; Greater Oakland Business Association; Local Businesses; Oakland A&E	Dependent on Specific Events	Garrett County, State of Maryland; Community Legacy Program; Oakland A&E	Medium Term (3 to 10 years)
Proactively pursue grant opportunities by strengthening collaboration with the Garrett Arts Council and Garrett County Economic Development.	Garrett County Economic Development; Garrett Arts Council; Local Artisans	Staff Time	N/A	Ongoing
Implement a series of initiatives aimed at making the downtown more inviting and engaging for residents and visitors.	Garrett County Economic Development; Garrett Arts Council; Local Artisans; Garrett County Chamber of Commerce and Visitor's Center; Oakland A&E	Decorative Lighting (\$10,000 - \$30,000) Public Art Installations (\$5,000 - \$25,000 per piece)	Maryland Main Street Program; Maryland DHCD; Maryland & Garrett County Arts Council; NEA; ARC; Oakland A&E	Short Term (1 to 3 years)
Work with strategic partners to implement downtown façade improvement programs to leverage the Town's historical and mixed-use properties.	Garrett County Community Action Committee; Garrett County Historical Society; Garrett County Arts Council	Design & Architectural Services (\$1,000 - \$5,000 per project. Material and Construction Costs) (\$5,000 - \$50,000 depend on specific renovations.	GCCAC; DHCD; Community Legacy Program;	Long Term (+ 10 years)
Develop a comprehensive downtown economic development plan.	Garrett County Economic Development; Garrett County Chamber of Commerce and Visitor's Center; Greater Oakland Business Association	\$25,000 and \$60,000 for a detailed and actionable plan.	DCHD; CDBG; ARC;	Medium Term (3 to 10 years)

# HOUSING

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS	PARTNERS	COSTS	FUNDING SOURCES	TIMEFRAME
Proactively address poverty and homelessness in the Town of Oakland.	Garrett County Lighthouse Inc; Garrett County Community Action Committee; Safe Harbor; HRDC Homeless Transitional Housing; Garrett County Health Department; Garrett Regional Medical Center	Staff Time	N/A	Ongoing
Continue to support and consult with local and regional organizations promoting housing affordability to ensure opportunities exist within the Town of Oakland for all who wish to live there.	Garrett County Community Action Committee; Garrett County Workforce Housing Alliance; Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development; USDA Rural Development	Staff Time	N/A	Ongoing
Ensure all housing in Oakland is affordable and fair by identifying potential barriers and continually reviewing policies and ordinances.	State of Maryland Department of Planning; Garrett County Workforce Housing Alliance; USDA Rural Development	Dependent on Projects	CDBG; HOME Investment Partnerships; DHCD; Maryland Mortgage Program	Medium Term (3 to 10 years)
Develop a Blighted Homes/Structure Inventory for targeted areas of improvement.	Garrett County Department of Planning and Land Management; Habitat for Humanity, Real Estate and Property Management Firms	Staff Time	N/A	Short Term (1 to 3 years)
Strengthen and update the enforcement of property maintenance codes.	Garrett County Department of Planning and Land Management	Staff Time	N/A	Ongoing
Explore partnerships and create incentives to encourage developers to prioritize affordable and diverse housing options, with a particular focus on senior citizens and younger families.	Garrett County Community Action Committee; Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development; Garrett County Workforce Housing Alliance; Real Estate Developers	Dependent on Projects	DHCD; CDBG; MAHT	Long Term (+10 years)
Provide residents with proactive resources and support to prevent blight.	Financial Institutions, Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development; Garrett County Department of Planning and Land Management	Dependent on Events/Materials	DCHD; CDBG; Habitat for Humanity	Short Term (1 to 3 years)



## COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS	PARTNERS	COSTS	FUNDING SOURCES	TIMEFRAME
Increase collaboration with the Ruth Enlow Library to enhance awareness of their offerings and encourage greater community utilization of their services.	Ruth Enlow Library	Staff Time	N/A	Ongoing
Seek and actively pursue funding to maintain and enhance Town trails, ensuring resilience against wear, improved visitor guidance, consistent signage, and expanded recreational amenities to foster enjoyment and appreciation of the natural environment.	Garrett County Department of Planning and Land Management; Garrett County Health Department; Garrett Trails; Maryland Department of Natural Resources; MDOT	Dependent on Projects	DNR; TAP; RTP; Garrett County - Program Open Space; MDOT's Fund 33/79	Ongoing
Develop a comprehensive marketing strategy to showcase Oakland's unique community assets including its arts and entertainment district, community events, main street, recreation, and others.	Garrett County Department of Planning and Land Management; Garrett County Arts Council; Historical Society & Museum; Oakland A&E; Garrett County Chamber of Commerce and Visitor's Center	Staff Time	N/A	Long Term (+10 years)
Leverage partnerships with Historical Society & Museum, Oakland B&O Museum, and other historical organizations to cultivate a strong community appreciation for local history, enhancing cultural awareness and community pride.	Historical Society & Museum; Oakland B&O Museum	Staff Time	N/A	Ongoing
Enhance and promote recreational opportunities by expanding amenities and activities while also continuing to collaborate with Garrett County to plan and implement projects from the County's Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan (LPPRP) and Program Open Space and introducing new projects and initiatives.	Garrett County Department of Planning and Land Management; DNR's Office of Outdoor Recreation; Garrett County Health Department	Dependent on Specific Facilities	Garrett County - Program Open Space; State of Maryland; LPPRP; CPP; DNR	Medium Term (3 to 10 years)
Establish a Capital Improvement Program (CIP) aligned with the Town's Annual Budget to systematically plan, prioritize, and fund public improvement projects over a revolving five-year period.	Garrett County Department of Planning and Land Management	Staff Time	N/A	Short Term (1 to 3 years)
Maintain a dynamic calendar of community events while broadening and diversifying options to engage a wider audience and cater to varied community interests.	Garrett County Department of Planning and Land Management; Garrett County Arts Council; Historical Society & Museum; Oakland A&E; Garrett County Chamber of Commerce and Visitor's Center	Dependent on Specific Events	DCHD; CDBG; Habitat for Humanity	Short Term (1 to 3 years)

## TRANSPORTATION

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS	PARTNERS	COSTS	FUNDING SOURCES	TIMEFRAME
Promote the installation of electric vehicle (EV) charging stations throughout Oakland to support sustainable transportation options and accommodate the growing demand for EV infrastructure.	MDOT	EV Charging Stations Range from \$2,500 - \$6,000	MDOT NEVI Program; Charge@Work Pledge; Maryland Energy Administration; EVSE Rebate Program	Medium Term (3 to 10 years)
Create and implement a Roadway Maintenance Plan to ensure Oakland's roads are safe, durable, and well-maintained, prioritizing repairs and enhancements based on need, usage, and budget	Garrett County; MDOT; SHA	Staff Time	N/A	Short Term (1 to 3 years)
Develop an Active Transportation Plan that focuses on creating a comprehensive network of pedestrian-friendly routes.	Garrett County; MDOT; SHA	\$50,000 and \$80,000 depending on scope	Transportation Alternatives (TA) Set-Aside Program; Maryland Bikeways Program; MDOT	Long Term (+10 years)
Support public transportation options through the Garrett Transit Service (GTS).	Garrett Transit Service; MDOT	Staff Time	N/A	Ongoing
Collaborate actively with Garrett County, State Highway Administration (SHA), and Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) to align transportation priorities.	Garrett County; MDOT; SHA	Staff Time	N/A	Long Term (+10 years)
Collaborate with CSX to enhance safety, signage, and lighting infrastructure along railroad tracks.	CSX Railines	Staff Time	N/A	Medium Term (3 to 10 years)

## NATURAL RESOURCES

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS	PARTNERS	COSTS	FUNDING SOURCES	TIMEFRAME
Continue to collaborate with Garrett County to review existing guidelines and regulations ensure continued alignment with best practices in environmental protection and land use management.	Garrett County Department of Planning and Land Management; Property Owners	Staff Time	N/A	Ongoing
Conduct a comprehensive assessment of existing buffers along water bodies, waterways, and flood zones.	Army Corps of Engineers; Maryland Department of Environment	Dependent on Property	Flood Plain Management Services (FPMS)	Short Term (1 to 3 years)
Leverage Oakland's natural resources and scenic landscapes to promote eco-tourism and outdoor recreation, which can boost the local economy while fostering environmental stewardship.	Garrett County Chamber of Commerce and Visitor's Center; Garrett Trails; Garrett County Department of Planning and Land Management; Local Businesses	Staff Time	N/A	Short Term (1 to 3 years)
Promote collaboration with the Broadford Lake Watershed Committee.	Garrett County Department of Planning and Land Management; Broadford Lake Watershed Committee; Local Conservation Districts	Staff Time	N/A	Ongoing
Develop and implement a Comprehensive Lake Management Plan for Broadford Lake.	Garrett County Department of Planning and Land Management; Broadford Lake Watershed Committee; Maryland Department of Environment	\$20,000 and \$40,000 depending on scope	State Lakes Protection and Restoration Fund; Watershed Assistance Grant Program; USDA - Environmental Quality Incentives Program	Long Term (+10 years)
Ensure compliance with regulations set by the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE).	Garrett County Department of Planning and Land Management; Maryland Department of Environment	Staff Time	N/A	Ongoing
Evaluate the potential environmental, health, legal, and economic impacts of hydraulic fracturing in the Town and determine the feasibility of adopting an ordinance to ban fracking within Town limits.	Garrett County Department of Planning and Land Management; Maryland Department of Environment	Staff Time	N/A	Short Term (1 to 3 years)



## WATER RESOURCES

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS	PARTNERS	COSTS	FUNDING SOURCES	TIMEFRAME
Support the County's efforts in the development of a new wastewater treatment plant	Garrett County Department of Public Works - Public Utilities Division	Staff Time	N/A	Ongoing
Continue to coordinate with the County to ensure that any extensions and increases of the capacity of the water systems, along with any projects, are included in the Garrett County Water and Sewerage Master Plan (W&S Plan).	Garrett County Department of Public Works - Public Utilities Division	Dependent on Projects	Maryland Department of Environment	Medium Term (3 to 10 years)
Continue to conduct comprehensive system-wide repairs and rehabilitation efforts, with a focus on modernizing outdated components and planning for future system resilience.	Garrett County Department of Public Works - Public Utilities Division	Staff Time	N/A	Short Term (1 to 3 years)
Collaborate with Garrett County and support local agencies to protect water quality in Broadford Lake and the Youghiogheny River Watershed, ensuring the health of these vital water resources for the community and the environment.	Garrett County Department of Planning and Land Management; Broadford Lake Watershed Committee; Local Conservation Districts	Staff Time	N/A	Ongoing
Work with Garrett County to develop climate-resilient water resource strategies to address potential droughts, heavy rainfall events, and other climate-related challenges. Also, incorporate climate projections into water management planning to ensure sustainable resources for the future.	Garrett County Department of Planning and Land Management; Broadford Lake Watershed Committee; Maryland Department of Environment	Dependent on Projects	DNR; Maryland Department of the Environment	Long Term (+10 years)

# APPENDICES





# ADDITIONAL ACTION ITEMS

These are additional action items identified during the planning process that did not rank as high priorities. The Town of Oakland should consider them if priorities change or funding sources become available.

## Natural Resources

- Actively promote and encourage residents to join the Water-Wise Program (a voluntary conservation landscape certification program that allows property owners to be recognized for implementing best management practices in their lawns and gardens) to enhance overall water quality.
- Collaborate with local and regional organizations to address tree replacement and maintenance efforts.
- Strengthen public engagement and education around water quality throughout Town.
- Continue to pursue funding and inter-jurisdictional coordination with relevant organizations and key stakeholders.

## Community Facilities & Services

- Enhance fisheries and recreational opportunities within Broadford Lake.
- Continue to collaborate with the Oakland Golf Club to identify and implement future enhancements and improvements to the Oakland Golf Course.

## Water Resources

- Coordinate with MDE Dam Safety and local jurisdictions to mitigate flooding risks and manage dam-related emergencies, particularly considering the dam's aging infrastructure and resilience concerns.
- Implement strategies to manage stormwater runoff effectively, prioritizing permeable solutions to reduce flooding, improve water quality, and enhance resilience against future storm events.

## Economic Development

- Increase and promote involvement and volunteerism with GOBA to enhance community engagement and support for local initiatives.
- Organize and provide educational sessions and/or materials to inform residents and local businesses about available tax incentives that are underutilized or unknown to most.

## Transportation

- Support and participate in implementing the County's Local Roadway Safety Plan (LRSP) to increase collaboration on safety initiatives, infrastructure improvements, and educational programs.



# ORDINANCE REFERENCE

Below is a sample ordinance from the Town of Friendsville that Oakland could use as a reference for developing a similar ordinance prohibiting fracking within Town limits.

## Mayor and Town Council Town of Friendsville

P.O. Box 9  
Friendsville, Maryland 21531

Founded 1765

### Ordinance 2016-2

#### Hydraulic Fracturing Ban Ordinance

**WHEREAS**, the Mayor and Town Council of Friendsville is authorized by the Maryland Code and by the Friendsville Town Charter to enact ordinances to protect the health, safety and welfare of residents of and visitors to the Town of Friendsville; and

**WHEREAS**, the Town Council shall have the power to pass all ordinances not contrary to the Constitution or the Laws of the State of Maryland or this Charter, as it may deem necessary for the good government of the Town; for the protection and preservation of peace and good order; for securing persons and properties from violence, danger or destruction; and for the protection and promotion of health, safety, comfort, convenience, welfare and happiness of the residents and employees of the Town, and visitors thereto, and sojourners therein, Charter of the Town of Friendsville Section 2-107;

**WHEREAS**, the well stimulation process known as hydraulic fracturing is used to extract deposits of oil, gas, and other hydrocarbons through the underground injection of large quantities of water, gels, acids or gases; sands or other proppants; and chemical additives, many of which are known to be toxic;

**WHEREAS**, the Town Council and the people of Friendsville seek to protect themselves from the harms associated with hydraulic fracturing, including threats to public health and safety, property damage and diminished property values, poor air quality, destruction of landscape, and pollution of drinking and surface water; and

**WHEREAS**, the Town Council and people of Friendsville have determined that the best way to safeguard our rights provided under the Charter of the Town of Friendsville, and to ensure the “protection and promotion of health, safety, comfort, convenience, welfare and happiness of the residents and employees of the Town,” is to prohibit hydraulic fracturing and the storage and disposal of its waste products within the Town of Friendsville.

# MAIN STREET DESIGNATION

The Main Street Approach is rooted in a commitment to broad-based community engagement, a holistic understanding of the factors that impact the quality of life in a community, and strategic focus on the core principles of downtown and neighborhood revitalization: Economic Vitality, Quality Design, Effective Promotion, and Sustainable Organization.

- **ECONOMIC VITALITY:** Focuses on capital, incentives, and other economic and financial tools to assist new and existing businesses, catalyze property development, and create a supportive environment for entrepreneurs and innovators that drive local economies.
- **DESIGN:** Supports a community's transformation by enhancing the physical and visual assets that set the commercial district apart.
- **PROMOTION:** Positions the downtown or commercial district as the center of the community and hub of economic activity, while creating a positive image that showcases a community's unique characteristics.
- **ORGANIZATION:** Involves creating a strong foundation for a sustainable revitalization effort, including cultivating partnerships, community involvement, and resources for the district.
- **CLEAN, SAFE, and GREEN:** Enhancing the perception of a neighborhood through the principle of Smart Growth and sustainability.

