

Garrett County Planning Commission Minutes

August 7, 2024

1. **Call to Order**- Chairman Tony Doerr called the regular meeting of the Garrett County Planning Commission to order at 1:30 pm on August 7, 2024, in the County Commissioners Meeting Room in the Garrett County Courthouse.
2. **Attendance**- Commission members: Tony Doerr, Jeff Conner, Liz Georg, Jeff Messenger, Tim Schwinabart and Larry Tichnell. Members of the Public: Aaron Teets and Jon Bell. Planning staff: Chad Fike, Bruce Metz and Siera Wigfield.
3. **Approval of Minutes**- The previous meeting minutes were approved as presented.
4. **Reports of Officers**-None.
5. **Deep Creek Watershed Zoning Appeals Cases**-
 - **VR-842**- an application submitted by Karen Myers for a Variance to allow the construction of a single-family residence to within 7' of both side setbacks. The property is located at 19976 Garrett Highway, Oakland, MD, 21550, Tax map 58, Parcel 261, Grid 16 and is zoned Town Center. The Planning Commission made no formal comments.
 - **SE-508**- an application submitted by Cove Creek Lodge LLC for a Special Exception to allow live outdoor entertainment. The property is located at 19638 Garrett Highway, Tax map 58, Parcel 754, Lot 1, Grid 16, and is zoned Town Center. The Planning Commission made no formal comments.
6. **Waiver Request- Sleepy Hollow Road Slope**-Aaron Teets requested a waiver from the maximum road slope requirements of the Garrett County Subdivision Ordinance. The request was made on behalf of ESDC, LLC and pertains to their property (Tax Map 50, Parcel 58) located off Gravelly Run Road in a Lake Residential 1 zoning district. After discussion, the Planning Commission unanimously granted the waiver to allow a proposed road to have a maximum slope of 16% if all areas of the road exceeding 12% are paved with asphalt or tar and chip and the road serves a maximum of 10 new dwelling units.
7. **Major Subdivision: Wisp PRD, Highland Adventures Eco Village Condominium Preliminary Plat.** M Four Holdings, LLC submitted a preliminary plat of Highland Adventures Eco-Village Condominium Section of the Wisp Resort Planned Residential Development (PRD). This phase of the PRD consists of a total of 15 dwelling units located on property (Tax Map 49, Parcel 618) located off Wisp Mountain Road in a Lake Residential 1 zoning district. The Planning Commission approved the plat by a unanimous vote with one abstention.
8. **Draft Local Roadway Safety Plan (LSRP)**- Siera Wigfield presented a draft copy of the Local Roadway Safety Plan. Comments will be received until September 11, 2024 then the Plan will be presented to the County Commissioners for approval. The plan is included as part of these minutes.
9. **Adjournment** – Chairman Tony Doerr adjourned the meeting at 2:14 pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Chad Fike, Assistant Director

Garrett County Local Roadway Safety Plan

July 2024



Acknowledgments

This project was funded by the Maryland State Highway Office of the Maryland Department of Transportation under a grant to Allegany and Garrett Counties.

Consultant services were provided by Mead & Hunt, Inc., a national architecture, engineering, and construction management firm, under the project management of Jamie Kendrick, AICP, with assistance from Hunter A. Withers and James Poeschel.

This project was supported by an advisory committee of agency and public stakeholders listed on page 21.

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Introduction: Fatalities and Injuries on Garrett County Roadways

From 2018 – 2022, there were 792 traffic crashes on Garrett County roadways resulting in 34 deaths and 1,115 injuries to motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists and others on all roads in Garrett County over those five years. Nationally, roadway fatalities and the fatality rate declined consistently for 30 years, but progress has stalled over the last decade and went in the wrong direction since 2020. Garrett County is no different as local trends have mirrored outcomes in Maryland and across the nation.

Every traffic-related crash impacts the lives of those involved. Fortunately, 95% of all crashes involved property damage only and resulted primarily in annoyance, inconvenience, aches, or pains. But for the 5% of crashes resulting in injury or fatality, the consequences can devastate families and communities. Thus, this plan and most other roadway safety plans focus on crashes which cause the most direct and indirect harm – those involving fatality or injury.

While property damage crashes tend to be more dispersed in time, location, and manner, there are clear patterns that emerge when reviewing the Killed and Severely Injured (KSI) crashes in Garrett County between 2018 and 2022.

- Nearly 30% of all KSI crashes occurred during dark hours (7PM to 6AM), while only 18% of daily VMT occurs during those hours.
- Nearly 40% of all KSI crashes occurred on just over 6% of all roadways*, referred to in this document as the High Injury Network.
- Nearly 30% of all KSI crashes involved driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Part I: Traffic Safety Baseline for Garrett County

Project Overview

Through the National Roadway Safety Strategy, the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) has established an ambitious long-term goal of zero roadway fatalities. Achieving this goal requires sustained partnership of at all levels of government and spanning a range of agencies and disciplines including public health, law enforcement and the judiciary, public works, education, and many others. The state of Maryland, acting through the Department of Transportation (MDOT), has adopted a zero-deaths plan that is led by the Maryland Highway Safety Office (MHSO). The plan's philosophy is that all crashes are preventable, and every injury is avoidable; saving lives and preventing injuries can only be achieved through a comprehensive set of traffic safety programs.

In turn, MDOT has challenged every local government to examine their programs, policies, and practices and develop a local strategic roadway safety plan (LRSP). The plan not only drives local efforts to improve traffic safety but also is a prerequisite to receiving funds from Maryland's allocation of federal High Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) funds and the USDOT's *Safe Streets for All* (SS4A) competitive grant program which makes \$1 billion available annually on a competitive basis for comprehensive safety implementation activities. This LRSP is intended to meet the required elements of a Comprehensive Safety Action Plan as defined by USDOT to be eligible for supplemental action plan or implementation grant funds.

Through a grant from MHSO, the Garrett County Department of Planning and Zoning led development of this plan. Partnering agencies and private organization representatives met over four months to analyze traffic safety data and develop locally supported actions that will save lives and reduce injuries on Western Maryland roadways.

This LRSP for Garrett County is prepared in two parts:

- Part 1 is a “benchmark” report that describes the county, recent traffic safety data, and stakeholder views on the nature of the traffic safety problem and potential solutions.
- Part 2 is the local roadway strategic plan itself with areas of emphasis and agreed-upon strategies to reduce the risk of fatal and serious injuries.

County Overview

Garrett County is the westernmost county in the state of Maryland and is located entirely in the Appalachian Mountains. The county shares borders with West Virginia to the south and west, and Pennsylvania to the north. The population of Garrett County, according to the 2020 Census, is 28,806, which makes it the third-least populous county in the state. Garrett County is home to 9 state parks that are popular attractions for tourists and visitors. The Garrett County Airport enhances the region's tourism industry and emergency air service evacuation and landing facilities. The Town of Oakland is the county seat.

Garrett County is a vibrant center for key industries that drive the economy and community forward. Opportunities for businesses, investors, and visitors are ubiquitous throughout the county. Within the Department of Community Development, there are four key industries for assisting with business development throughout the county. The key industries are:

- Agri-Business: Cultivating Success, which focuses on promoting local farms, agricultural enterprises, organic farming, and sustainable agriculture.
- Energy: Powering the Future, which emphasizes the investments in and innovation of renewable energy sources to assist the county in leading environmental stewardship.
- Specialty Manufacturing: Crafting Excellence relates to the county being defined by creativity, craftsmanship, and technological innovation. The many manufacturers within the county produce goods for a diverse array of businesses, both internal and external to the county.
- Tourism and Recreation: Discover Adventure industry focuses on drawing visitors with interested in the county's landscapes, outdoor activities, and warm hospitality to the county.

Governance of Transportation Planning, Policy, and Safety

Garrett County is a code home rule county governed by a three-member Board of Commissioners. A County Administrator manages the day-to-day work of the local government; agencies with responsibilities related to traffic safety report to the County Administrator. This includes the Department of Planning and Zoning and the Department of Public Works; the Health Department and Board of Liquor License Commissioners are quasi-state agencies that effectively function as part of county government. Other agencies critical to traffic safety include:

- The MDOT State Highway Administration which is responsible for maintenance, design, and construction of state and federal roadways.
- The Maryland State Police has primary authority for law enforcement on state and federal roadways; they are supported by the Garrett County Sheriff who is the county's chief law enforcement officer and is elected by the voters countywide.
- The Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Police is responsible for patrol of roadways within state parks and has statewide authority on public roadways.
- The Garrett County Public Schools which are governed by a separately elected Board of Education.

- Judges of the District Court of Maryland adjudicate most traffic-related charges; they are appointed by the Governor of Maryland with the advice and consent of the State Senate.

All these agencies – each with their separate reporting and accountability structures – must act in concert to reduce traffic fatalities and serious injuries.

In addition, the Traffic and Transportation Advisory Committee operates within Garrett County government and is comprised of representatives of the Sheriff’s Office, the Planning and Land Management Division of the Department of Community Development, and the Department of Public Works including the Roads Division.

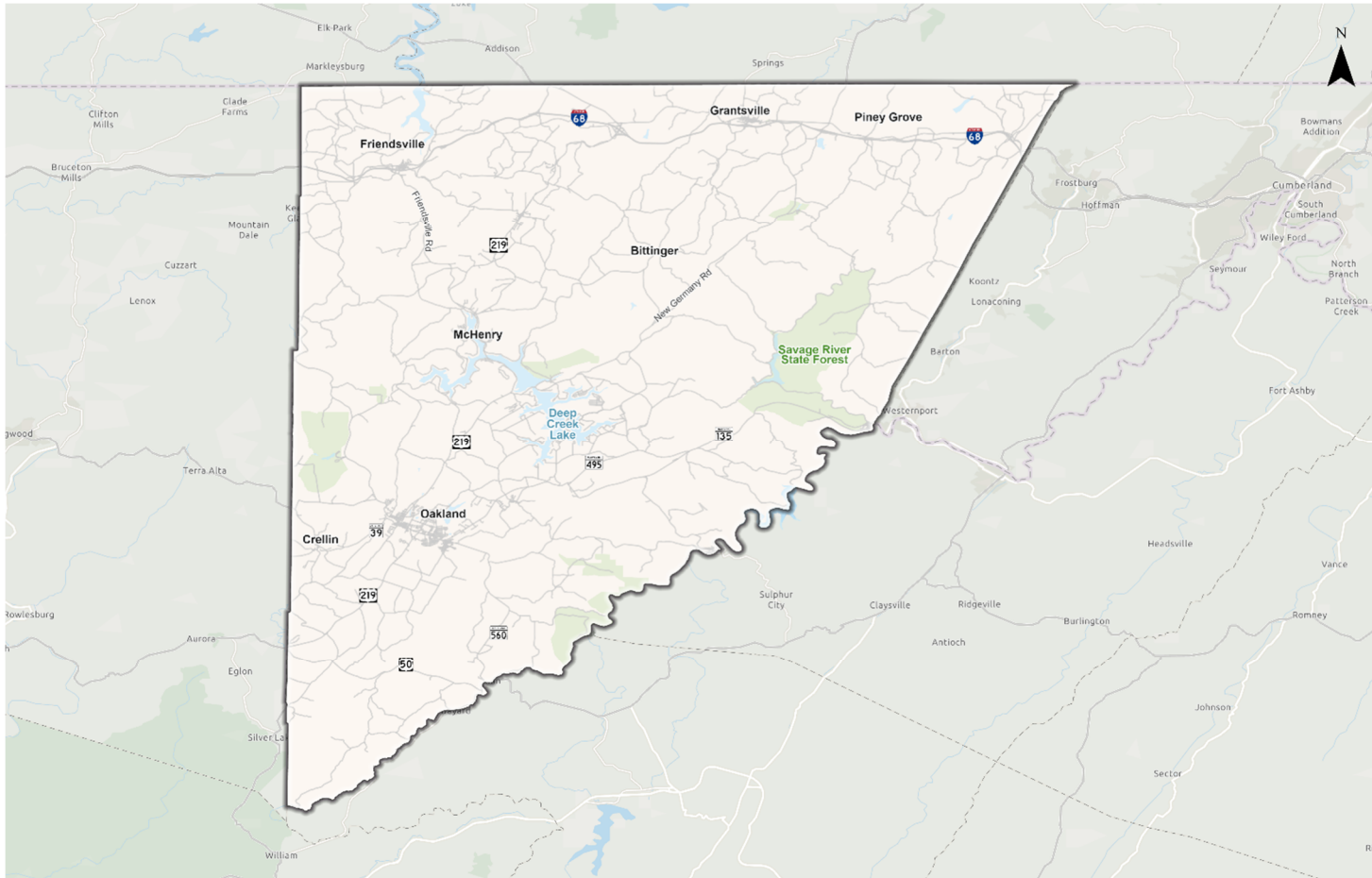
The following are the county’s eight municipalities, which play a role that is critical to traffic safety:

- Town of Accident
- Town of Deer Park
- Town of Friendsville
- Town of Grantsville
- Town of Kitzmiller
- Town of Loch Lynn
- Town of Mountain Lake Park
- Town of Oakland

Transportation Network & Planned Safety Improvements

As a rural community, the single-occupant vehicle is the predominant mode of travel. Interstate 68 and US 40, and 219 are the major highways in Garrett County. State routes that are most frequently traveled include MD 38, 39, 42, 135, 495, 546, 560, 669, and 946.

- The County has a very limited capital budget for road improvements. The realignment of Glendale Road was recently completed by removing a curve in the road and providing entrances to the north and south portion at the front of Glendale Road.
- MDOT SHA is conducting final design activities to relocate US 219 from Old Salisbury Road to the Pennsylvania State line (1.0 mile). This project represents Maryland's portion of the bi-state US 219 corridor between I-68/ US 40 and Meyersdale, Pennsylvania. Safety and capacity improvements are proposed.
- MDOT SHA has ten active bridge improvement projects and three active resurfacing and safety improvement projects in Garrett County. The resurfacing projects include Swanton Road from Durst Road to US 40 Alt; Finzel Road from Beall School Road to the Pennsylvania state line; and Chestnut Ridge Road from US 40 Alt to the Pennsylvania state line.



Highway Map of Garrett County

Transit Services

Garrett Transit Service (GTS) is the public transportation provider for Garrett County with operations being managed by Garrett County Community Action, a non-profit organization. The services run on weekdays to meet the needs of residents and visitors. Riders call the dispatchers that assist with scheduling their next trip. The subscription service allows for on-call scheduling of frequent rides, such as a ride to work each day. Riders are encouraged to call 24 hours in advance for local trips and at least 3 business days in advance for out-of-county trips.



Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

Garrett County is home to many parks and recreational facilities that provide ample bicycle and pedestrian amenities. The state parks are highly travelled by residents and tourists alike. Local infrastructure includes various sidewalks and bicycle paths, though there is always room for improvement. The Towns of Oakland, Grantsville, and Accident are examples of municipalities that have bicycle and pedestrian facilities, including bike paths, and walking trails. The 2050 Maryland Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan provides infrastructure recommendations to increase mode shift and improve safety for improving walking and biking throughout the state.



Primary state-owned roads through municipalities such as US 40 in Grantsville (left) and US 219 in Oakland (right) tend to have sidewalks.

Data Driven Analysis of Traffic Safety

Local Roadway Safety Plans are intended to be data driven, although the qualitative experience of community residents, planners and engineers, law enforcement officials and others cannot be discounted. From 2018 – 2022, there were 2,457 reported¹ traffic crashes in Garrett County of which 762 resulted in an occupant or other roadway user being killed or injured. This section explores a few datapoints which shape the Local Roadway Safety Plan for Garrett County.

Data Sources and Analytical Methods

Crash data was sourced from both the Maryland Highway Safety Office (MHSO) as well as the Maryland Department of State Police (MDSP). Data from the MHSO includes the calendar years 2018 through and including 2022 while data from the MDSP includes data from January 1, 2018 to December 17, 2023. Data from the MDSP is submitted through the Automated Crash Reporting System (ACRS) which relates every crash with a mappable location. Certain crashes may not appear in this dataset due to insufficient detail and coordinates may not represent the exact location of crashes. Therefore, this analysis utilizes data from the MSHO to provide more reliable statistics while the data from the MDSP serves primarily to identify High Injury Networks (HIN) and to establish a visual representation of where crashes occur throughout the county.

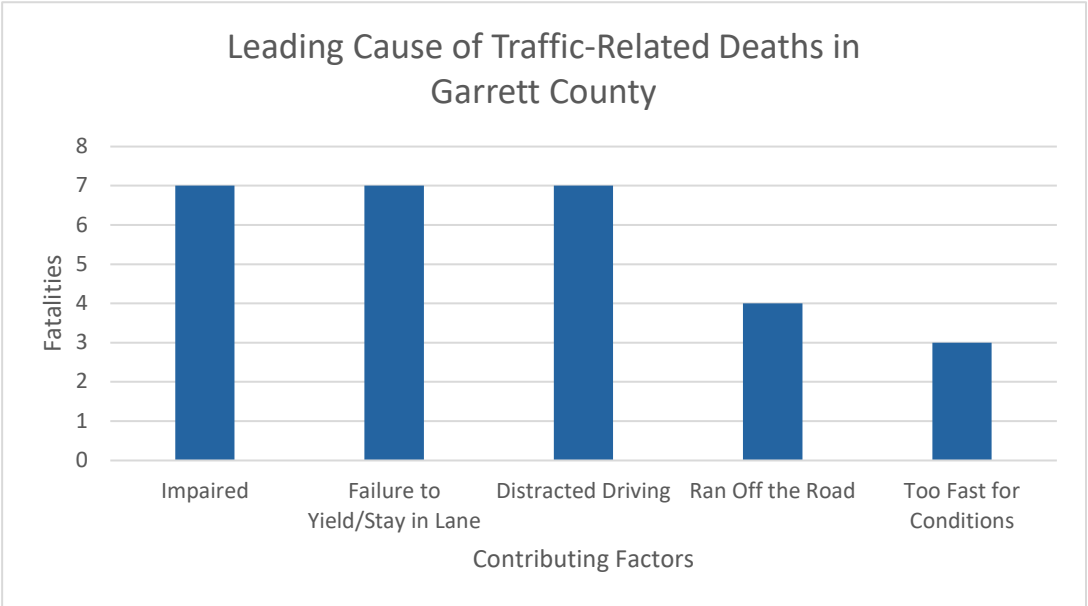
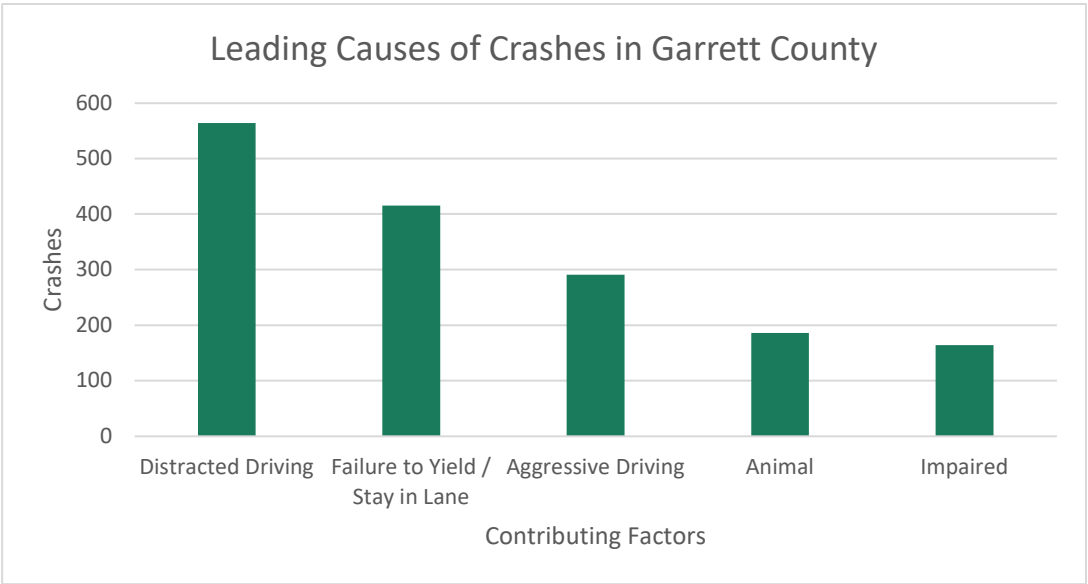
Data on roadway mileage, traffic volumes, etc. was sourced from the MDOT SHA Data Services Division’s annual reports. The analysis herein may or may not align specifically with the analysis of MDOT SHA or MHSO because of differences in calculation methods. For example, there are four causes/contributing factor categories in the datasets relating impairment which include alcohol, illegal drugs, medications, or combinations thereof. All were combined into a single category here because they are interrelated.

The LRSP is focused on “top lines” of traffic safety data, meaning that the findings below should be considered indicative of crash patterns. More granular analysis as to crashes at certain locations or by certain causes or contributing factors is necessary in making specific programmatic decisions or investments.

Leading Causes and Contributing Factors of KSI Crashes

The causes and contributing factors of KSI crashes are primarily behavioral in nature; that is, decisions made by drivers lead to poor outcomes. Examples of behavioral factors include driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs, driving while distracted, speeding, and recklessness. While improving roadway infrastructure can mitigate the seriousness of crashes, changing driver behavior through enforcement and education will have the most significant impact on fatalities and serious injuries.

¹ Discussions within the advisory committee indicated that there are hundreds, if not thousands more crashes that occur every year that do not get reported. Failure to document these crashes – although they tend to be minor and involve only property damage – indicates that a full picture of traffic safety is not available.



High Injury Network

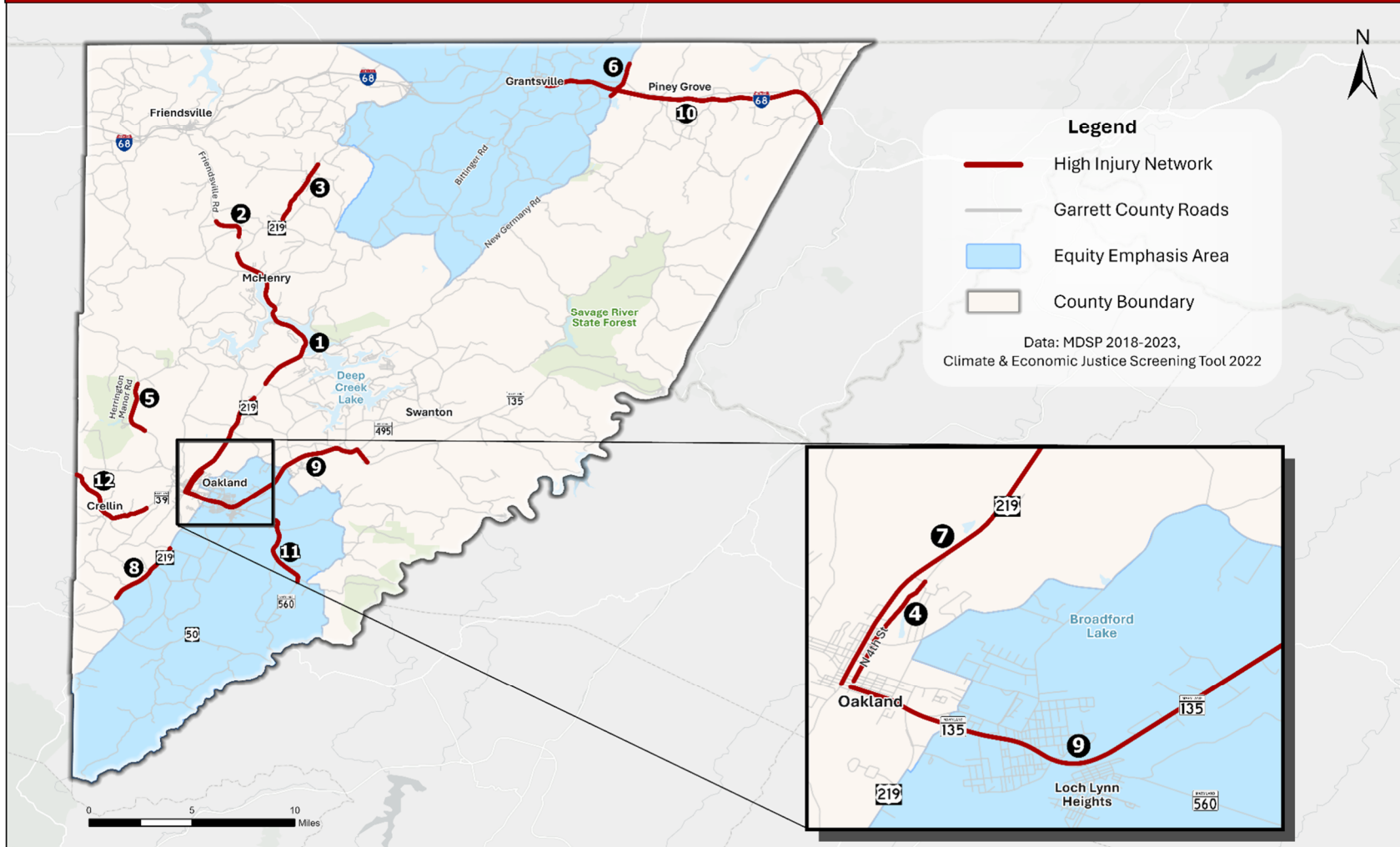
Although the leading causes and contributing factors of severe crashes are behavioral in nature, those outcomes are disproportionately concentrated on just a few roadway segments; 39% of all injury/fatal crashes occur on just 6.1% (65 miles) of all roadways in the County. These roadway segments are deemed the “High Injury Network” (HIN) for Garrett County and shown/listed in the maps and accompanying tables below.

Designation of roadway segments as part of the High Injury Network can focus resources on reducing or mitigating severe crashes. For example, if a roadway on the High Injury Network has significant horizontal or vertical curves, there are mitigation measures that can be taken to slow traffic, alert drivers of roadway conditions, and lessen the impact at locations when crashes most frequently occur. Long, flat road segments or segments with high traffic volumes on the High Injury Network may lend themselves to saturation patrols and greater enforcement of speed limits. Specific strategies are explored later in Part 2.

Fatalities & Injuries (2018 - 2023)				Roadway Mileage		
Road Ownership	Injury/Fatal Crashes on HIN Segments	Total Injury/Fatal Crashes Countywide	HIN Injury/Fatal Crashes as % of Total Crashes	HIN Centerline Miles	Total Centerline Mileage	HIN Mileage as a % of Total Mileage
State	339	634	53.5%	61	186	32.8%
County/ Municipal	25	294	8.5%	4	876	0.5%
Total	364	928	39%	65	1,062	6.1%

High Injury Network for Garrett County, MD								
Label	Roadway	Fatal Crashes	Injury Crashes	Bike/Ped (Injury + Fatal)	Injury/Fatal Crashes per Mile	Segment Length (Miles)	Number of Travel Lanes	Speed Limit
1	US 219 (Sand Flat Rd to Friendsville Rd)	2	70	3	8.87	8.12	2/3	45
2	Friendsville Rd (N of Gap Run Rd to S of Hoyes Rd)	1	8	0	6.44	1.4	2	45
3	US 219 (Bumble Bee Rd to S of Pud Miller Rd)	3	11	1	4.66	3	2	40
4	Fourth St (Alder St to Penny Ln)	0	11	0	10.01	1.1	2	25
5	Herrington Manor Rd (Cranesville Rd to S of Herrington Ln)	1	5	0	2.36	2.54	2	45
6	Chestnut Ridge Rd (Meadow Lake Dr to Old Salisbury Rd)	0	9	0	5.13	1.75	2	40
7	US 219 (Oak St to Cherokee Ln)	1	51	2	9.78	5.32	2	30 / 55
8	US 219 (Paul Friend Rd to Sunnyside Rd)	1	15	0	5.02	3.18	2	50
9	MD 135 (4th St to B&O Railroad)	3	56	1	6.95	8.49	2	40
10	I-68 (E of MD 495 to East County Boundary)	2	78	0	6.94	11.53	8	70. Trucks 45
11	MD 560 (Doctor Tolson Rd to White Church Steyer Rd)	0	14	0	4.05	3.46	2	50
12	MD 39 (Crellin)	0	18	0	4.41	4.08	2	50

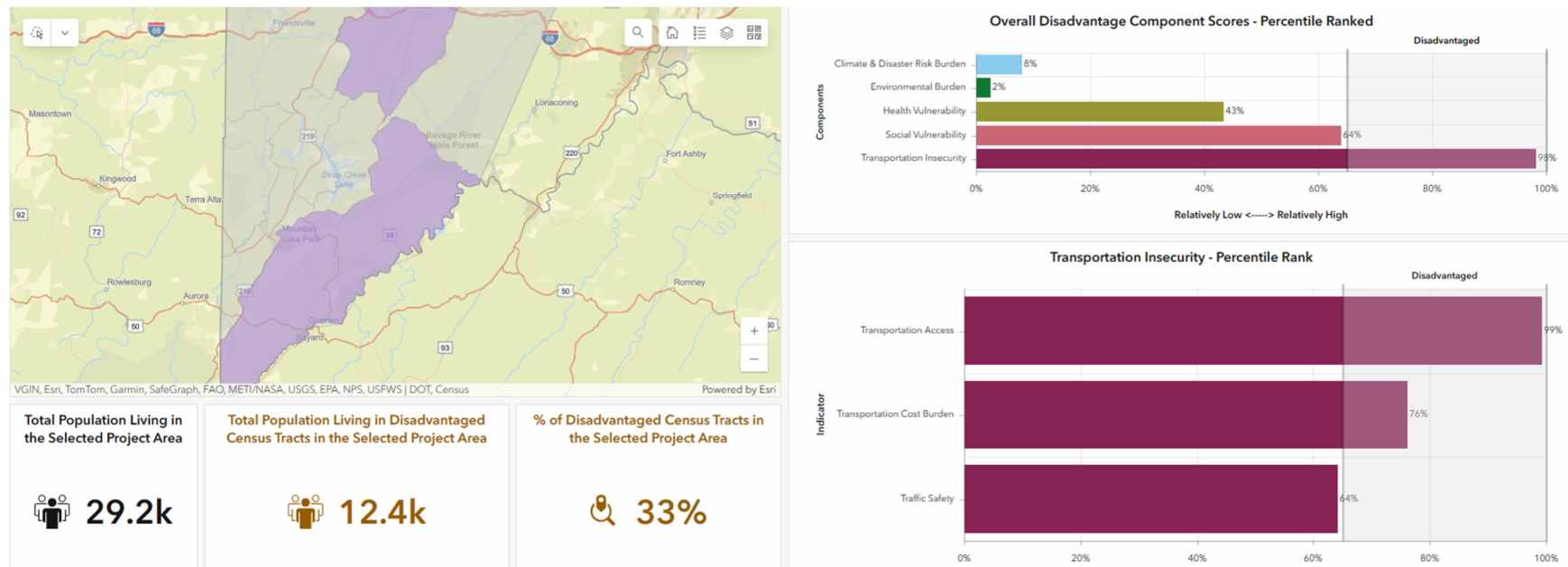
Garrett County High Injury Network



Equity Analysis

Equity analysis in transportation planning encourages an understanding of how the benefits and burdens of decisions affect vulnerable or historically disadvantaged populations. In 2021, the Board of County Commissioners affirmed that “diversity, equity, and inclusion should be at the forefront of the way in which [they] would consider and establish policy” and instructed Garrett County government employees to develop an equity impact assessment for all proposed policies, practices, programs, plans, and budgetary decisions before the Board of County Commissioners.²

USDOT’s Equitable Transportation Community Explorer identifies nearly 40% of the land area of Garrett County to be disadvantaged with approximately 33% of the county’s population living in these areas, including the census tracts centered on Mountain Lake Park and Grantsville. That said, the roadways on which the KSIs have occurred are primary arterials and interstate roadways with considerable through traffic and therefore it does not necessarily correlate that the KSI crashes involved persons of economic or social disadvantage. Reliable data does not exist in this regard. It can only be noted that there were 219 out of 928 injury or fatal crashes occurred within equity emphasis areas. Of these crashes, 4 involved pedestrians or cyclists, making up 20% of all non-motorist injury/fatal crashes.

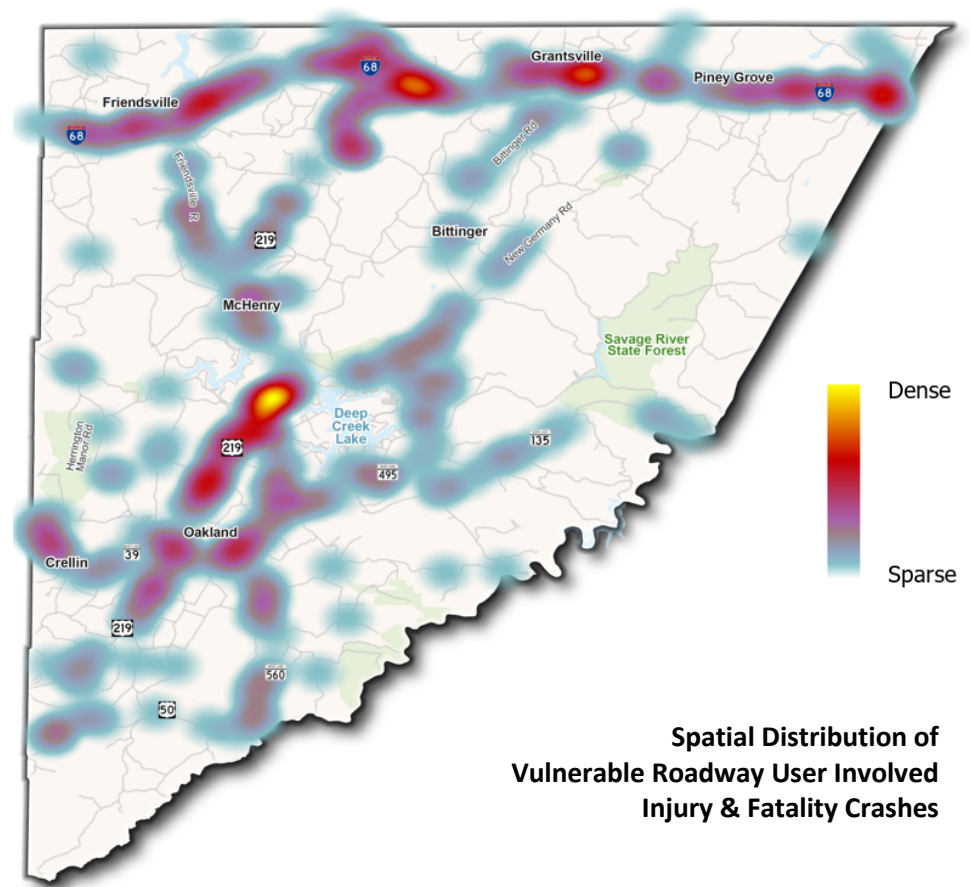


² [Board of County Commissioners Resolution 2021-24](#). This report will be completed later in 2024.

Still, the opportunity for equity to be considered in policy, program, and budget decisions is apparent. For example, areas of greater economic and social disadvantage tend to have lower rates of auto ownership and higher rates of travel on foot or bicycle. Focusing on pedestrian-safety investments in the disadvantaged areas. A potential negative outcome could occur, though, if a higher rate of traffic stops in equity emphasis areas disproportionately impacts persons of economic and social disadvantage. The importance of creating and fostering an environment for transportation safety for all modes of transportation in the equity emphasis areas relies on the approach reaching and communicating such needs, including the potential positive and negative consequences, with the residents and visitors to these areas at a common ground. It is key that all those who travel through these areas receive the benefits associated with traffic safety improvements. Crashes are preventable, and knowledge regarding how needs to be made available to all.

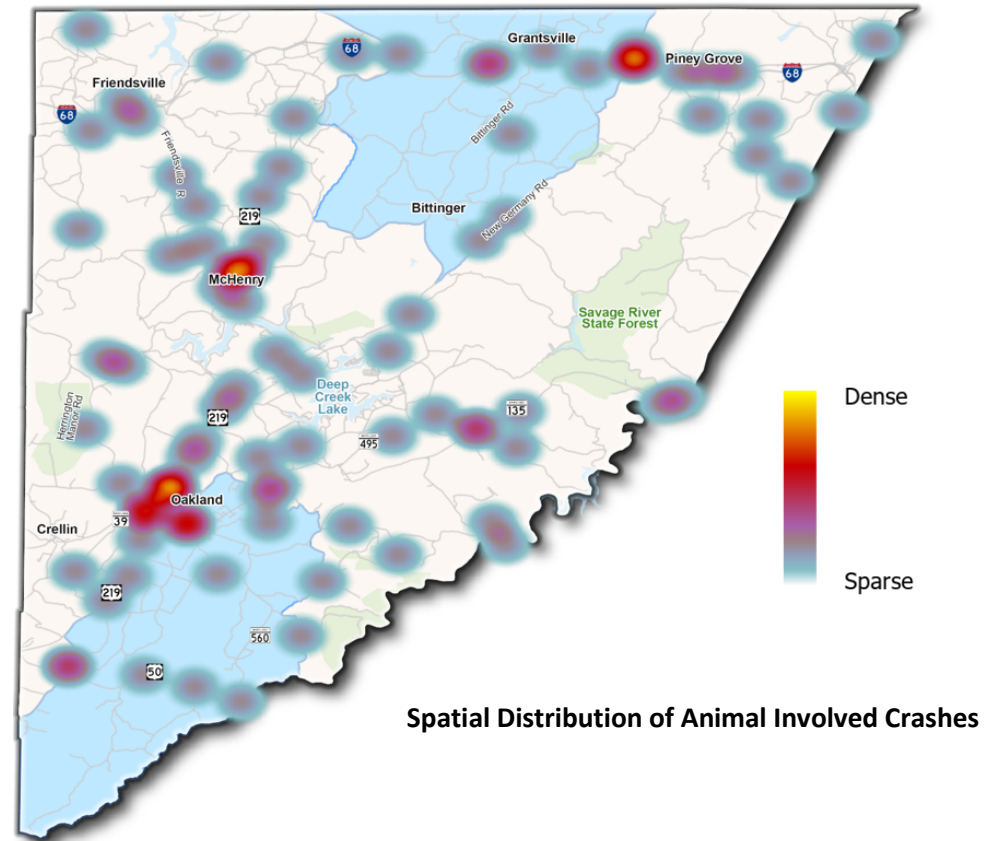
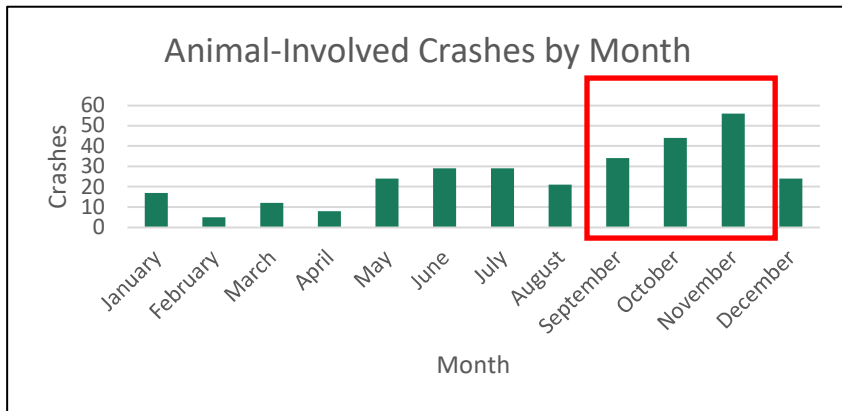
Vulnerable Roadway Users

Pedestrians, bicyclists, motorcyclists, low-speed and farm vehicle operators, and other roadway users with less protection from collisions are considered “vulnerable roadway users.” Of the 30 traffic fatal crashes between 2018 and 2022 in Garrett County, none of them involved a pedestrian or a cyclist. However, nearly one-third involved a vulnerable roadway user, with seven motorcyclist fatalities and two fatalities occurring on all-terrain vehicles. The map below shows the spatial distribution of injury/fatal crashes involving vulnerable roadway users. There was no notable concentration of fatal vulnerable roadway user crashes in any part of the county.



Wildlife-Vehicle Crashes (WVC)

Of the 2,457 total crashes that occurred from 2018-2022 in Garrett County, 303 were involved wildlife -- the 4th leading cause of crashes in Garrett County. WVC crashes are most common along I-68 and have their highest density along US 219, west of Deep Creek Lake. A significant increase in WVCs occurring in the Fall months when hunting season is at its peak, although there is no causation or correlation implied. Although there were no fatalities and only 5% of injuries being directly attributed to animal crashes, it should be noted that WVCs are often attributed to a combination of factors such as distracted driving and speeding, which are among the highest causes of severe injury crashes.



Spatial Distribution of Animal Involved Crashes

Stakeholder Engagement & Viewpoints

Stakeholder engagement is an important part of the strategic process to develop roadway safety plans. TCCSMD selected two primary means of stakeholder engagement: a project advisory committee and information-gathering interviews with agency and community leaders to gain their views on policy and program gaps, opportunities, and priorities. Broader stakeholder engagement will occur when the LRSP is brought to the Board of County Commissioners for public hearing and adoption.

From Garrett County, agencies and organizations represented on the project advisory committee included:

- Garrett County Board of Education
- Garrett County Department of Public Works
- Garrett County Sheriff's Office
- Garrett County Department of Community Development
 - Planning and Land Development Division
- Garrett County Department of Public Works
 - Roads Division
 - Facilities & Maintenance Division
- Garrett County Emergency Services
- Maryland State Highway Administration
- Maryland State Police

Interviews were conducted confidentially so that stakeholders could openly share their views on traffic safety challenges in the County. Several key themes emerged from these interviews:

- While recognized as a problem by stakeholders, traffic safety issues do not seem to have risen to a level of public consciousness that demands action by agencies and elected officials.
- Agencies are not resourced for success in reducing serious injuries and fatalities. For example, law enforcement officers who are supposed to be dedicated to traffic safety are often deployed to escort oversized vehicles, provide funeral details, and backfill patrol shifts. The County's capital improvement program is focused on delivering major capital projects and system preservation projects with fewer resources for minor safety-related projects such as spot geometric improvements, traffic calming, guardrail and rumble strip installation, and warning beacons.
- Engineering and law enforcement efforts tend to be complaint-driven rather than data-driven. While citizen complaints about speeding, for example, indicate community quality of life concerns, those complaints tend to not correlate to historical patterns of fatalities or serious injuries. That said, a comprehensive safety education, enforcement, and preventative engineering effort in school zones would be welcomed by all stakeholders.
- Pedestrian error is often the leading cause of pedestrian injuries and fatalities. Roads in Garrett County are not often designed with the pedestrian in mind – and even when they are, pedestrians tend to take the shortest distance which is not always the safest route.

- Rural roadways do not have mitigations or protections that could reduce fatalities and serious injuries. Lighting at intersections, guard rails at sharp curves, centerline/edgeline rumble strips, and micro-surfacing to improve traction, and other efforts should be more widely used.
- Concern was expressed that the judiciary does not impose significant penalties for the violation of serious traffic offenses. Some recent education of judges has occurred, and staff are hopeful that outcomes will improve. It has become more difficult to arrange for victim impact statements due to lack of staff at community-based organizations.

Recommendations for Emphasis Areas & Targets

Based on data analysis, stakeholder views, and to achieve alignment with other local, regional, and state plans, the following emphasis areas are recommended to eliminate fatalities and serious injuries on Garrett County roadways. Specific strategies are discussed in Part 2 of the LRSP and should be applied countywide.

- Systematically Reduce the Risk of Roadway Departure and Head-on Collisions on the High Injury Network
- Address Unique Safety Issues of Rural, Mountainous Communities
- Address Speeding, Aggressive, and Distracted Driving
- Protect Vulnerable Roadway Users

Part II: Strategies to Eliminate Roadway Deaths and Serious Injuries in Garrett County

Emphasis Area #1: Systematically Reduce the Risk of Roadway Departure and Head-on Collisions on the High Injury Network

More than 43% of all serious injuries and fatalities occur on the High Injury Network described in Part 1 of the LRSP. The types of crashes most characteristic of rural areas—single-vehicle roadway departures and head-on collisions—are more likely to result in serious injury or fatality than low-speed, congestion-related collisions in urban areas. While excessive speed and inattention are the driver behaviors that most frequently lead to rural-road crashes, the state and county can take steps to mitigate their severity. As county and state agencies make resource allocation decisions, they should be mindful of where investments will likely have the greatest impact. The following actions should be pursued:

- Conduct **roadway safety audits** on all High Injury Network segments.
- **Implement low-cost** safety countermeasures such as rumble strips, enhanced signage, and increased delineation of horizontal curves to warn drivers of hazards; and, guardrails, clear zone management, and pavement friction to mitigate the severity of crashes are known to occur frequently.
- **Seek funding through the Safe Streets for All program to develop and implement safety and spot improvements as appropriate along the High Injury Network and**
- Develop and implement a pedestrian safety plan specific to the MD 135 corridor through and approaching Oakland that limits crossings at unsignalized locations, improves pedestrian visibility, manages vehicular speeds, and uses other effective safety countermeasures.

Emphasis Area #2: Address Unique Safety Issues of Rural, Mountainous Communities

The far western counties of Maryland face unique challenges including terrain, environment, and weather; off-road vehicles; wildlife-vehicle crashes; and emergency response capacity. Solutions to these challenges are incredibly difficult to the dispersed nature of crashes and isolation of many parts of the county. More detailed information and planning is needed. the county and state should pursue the following:

- The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) offers the the Wildlife Crossings Pilot Program (WCPP), a **competitive grant program with the goal of reducing Wildlife Vehicle Collisions (WVCs)** while improving habitat connectivity for terrestrial and aquatic species. In 2023, neighboring Pennsylvania was awarded \$840,000 to develop a comprehensive statewide strategic plan with the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Pennsylvania Game Commission and others to address the wide-ranging challenges and opportunities associated with the safe management and stewardship for wildlife crossings across the state.

- The backbone of emergency response in Garrett County is its volunteer fire and rescue companies. Between Garrett and Allegany County, there are 39 such operations which support each other across jurisdictional lines. The companies are supported by the Garrett County Department of Emergency Management which is responsible for interoperable communications and emergency medical services/advanced life support. Nationwide, the recruitment and retention of volunteer first-responders is a significant challenge for round-the-clock operations; maintaining sufficient and up-to-date equipment is another challenge. **Further study is necessary to understand existing and forecast future capacity of volunteer fire and rescue companies to meet National Fire Protection Association standards for rural response times.**
- Winter weather is particularly fierce in Garrett County. Snowfalls can range from 4' to 16' annually over multiple intense storms. While most residents understand the peril of winter travel, users of the major arterials (US 219, I-68, and others) and visitors to the region do not always have a full appreciation of the challenge of driving in severe weather. **Local law enforcement agencies should continue their efforts to discourage driving in severe weather and close certain roadways to travel when appropriate.**

Emphasis Area #3: Address Speeding, Aggressive, and Distracted Driving

Speeding and distracted driving are consistently amongst the most common causes of automobile crashes in the United States. Garrett County is no different with speeding and distracted driving claiming over 23% of all deaths and over 20% of all injury crashes. The following speed control policies and programs should be brought about in efforts to improve road safety:

- **Reduce posted speeds** along the High Injury Network.
- Form a **speed enforcement task force** comprised of the municipal and County agencies, and the Maryland State Police to agree on speed reduction strategies and develop a resource sharing agreement to implement them.
- Consider the use of **speed enforcement cameras** where eligible in the county.
- Encourage the judiciary to **strictly adjudicate the most egregious speeding cases.**

Emphasis Area #4: Protect Vulnerable Roadway Users

The vulnerability of the different types of roadway users varies based on the method of transportation used, and being aware of the significance between them is a major component of improving traffic safety. Pedestrians, bicyclists, motorcyclists, low-speed and farm vehicle operators, and other roadway users with less protection from collisions are considered “vulnerable roadway users.” The most vulnerable roadway users are bicyclists and pedestrians due to their lack of enforced protection from their transportation mode’s utilization efforts. An individual in a car has the car’s included safety features and mechanisms to protect them should they be involved in a crash. Bicyclists and pedestrians lack those safety measures and requires much more thought and care for their safety, which is of a high priority. The following details various methodologies for increasing and maintaining the safety of vulnerable roadway users being that traffic safety for all is paramount.

- Continue to build out **the bicycle and pedestrian network in the municipal areas** and develop new bicycle and pedestrian safety plans.
- Develop and implement a **bicycle and pedestrian safety plan specific to the MD 135** corridor that limits crossings at unsignalized locations, improves pedestrian visibility, manages vehicular speeds, and uses other effective safety countermeasures.
- Invest in **quick-build safety measures** including paint, safety posts, temporary sidewalk extensions, traffic calming devices, etc. near schools and community facilities.
- Document all **roadway/trail crossings** in the county and develop appropriate measures to warn motorists of crossings.

Roadway Safety Targets

As an aspirational goal, Garrett County is committed to achieving zero deaths and serious injuries on its roadways by 2040. The targets below relate to the emphasis areas where the county intends to make significant progress.

Category	2017 – 2021 Five Year Average KSIs (Baseline)	2029 Interim Target Annual KSIs	2035 Interim Target KSIs	2040 Vision
Vulnerable Roadway Users	25	17	8	0
Impaired	8	5	2	0
Speeding, Reckless, and Inattentive Driving	24	17	8	0
Rural Roads	95	66	33	0

Reporting on the annual targets towards zero deaths by 2040 will occur in a variety of forms and forums to be determined. The Garrett County Traffic Safety Committee should be primarily responsible in reporting KSI outcomes and annual activities to move toward zero deaths.

Implementation Plan

Emphasis Area	Action	Agencies Involved						Timeline				Cost		
		Elected Officials	Law Enforcement	Judiciary	SHA	Public Works	Planning & Zoning	Immediate	Years 1 to 3	Years 4 to 6	Ong oing	Low	Medium	High
Reduce the Risk of Roadway Departure and Head On Collisions on the High Injury Network	Conduct roadway safety audits on all High Injury Network segments.		x		x	x	x		x			x		
	Implement low-cost safety countermeasures to mitigate the severity of crashes are crashes are known to occur frequently.				x	x			x			x		
	Seek funding through the Safe Streets for All program to develop and implement safety and spot improvements as appropriate along the High Injury Network							x		x				x
	Develop and implement a pedestrian safety plan specific to the MD 135 corridor through and approaching Oakland				x		x			x				x

Emphasis Area	Action	Agencies Involved						Timeline				Cost		
		Elected Officials	Law Enforcement	Judiciary	SHA	Public Works	Planning & Zoning	Immediate	Years 1 to 3	Years 4 to 6	Ongoing	Low	Medium	High
Address Issues Unique to Mountain Communities	Pursue Wildlife Crossings Pilot Program (WCPP) funds to develop a strategic plan to reduce wildlife-vehicle crashes.				x		x			x	x	x		
	Further study is necessary to understand existing and forecast future capacity of volunteer fire and rescue companies to meet National Fire Protection Association standards for rural response times.	x							x			x		
	Local law enforcement agencies should continue their efforts to discourage driving in severe weather and close certain roadways to travel when appropriate.		x				x				x	x		

Emphasis Area	Action	Agencies Involved						Timeline			Cost		
		Elected Officials	Law Enforcement	Judiciary	SHA	Public Works	Planning & Zoning	Immediate	Years 1 to 3	Years 4 to 6	Low	Medium	High
Address Speeding, Aggressive, and Distracted Driving	Reduce posted speeds along the High Injury Network.				x	x		x			x		
	Form a speed enforcement task force comprised of the municipal and County agencies, and the Maryland State Police to agree on speed reduction strategies and develop a resource sharing agreement to implement them.		x					x			x		
	Encourage the judiciary to strictly adjudicate the most egregious speeding cases.	x	x	x					x		x		
	Consider the use of speed enforcement cameras.	x	x						x		x		

Emphasis Area	Action	Agencies Involved						Timeline			Cost		
		Elected Officials	Law Enforcement	Judiciary	SHA	Public Works	Planning & Zoning	Immediate	Years 1 to 3	Years 4 to 6	Low	Medium	High
Protect Vulnerable Roadway Users	Continue to build out the bicycle and pedestrian network in the municipal areas.	x			x	x	x			x			x
	Develop and implement a pedestrian safety plan specific to the MD 135 through and approaching Oakland				x		x		x			x	
	Invest in quick-build safety measures including paint, safety posts, temporary sidewalk extensions, traffic calming devices, etc. near schools and community facilities.				x	x	x		x		x		
	Document all roadway/trail crossings in the county and develop appropriate measures to warn motorists of crossings.				x	x	x		x		x		