



TUCKER COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Approved by County Commission on December 12, 2012

TUCKER COUNTY COMMISSION

Tom Carr, President
Lowell Moore
Michael Rosenau

TUCKER COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

Ben Herrick, President
Keith Strausbaugh, Vice President
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April Miller, Treasurer
Tom Carr, County Commission Representative
Doris Bonner
Jonathan Hicks
Rob Burns

TABLE OF CONTENTS

• Introduction	
○ Goals and Objectives	3
○ Purpose	
○ Process	
• Current Situation	9
○ Regional Setting	
○ Physical Land Conditions	
○ Demographic Profile	
• Land Use	15
• Housing	24
• Transportation	27
• Infrastructure	33
• Public Services	40
• Rural Land not Intended for Urban Growth	51
• Recreation and Tourism	52
• Economic Development	61
• Economic Opportunities	67
• Community Design	71
• Preferred Development and Redevelopment	74
• Historic Preservation and Resource Conservation	76

- Appendices 80
 - Canaan Valley Zoning Ordinance
 - Stakeholder Meeting Notes
 - Copy of the Survey sent to the residences of Tucker County
 - Tabulated results of the Tucker County Survey

INTRODUCTION

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The following is a Comprehensive Plan for Tucker County. The purpose of Tucker County's Comprehensive Plan is to outline the long-term plan and to include a set of goals, objectives, and strategies for Tucker County.

Goals

The goal of the Comprehensive Plan is to achieve a balance between bringing prosperity and business development to the county while continuing to safeguard the natural beauty and the resources that are available within the county.

Goals are concerned with the long term, and often describe ideal situations that would result if all plan purposes were fully realized. Since goals are value-based, their attainment is difficult to measure.

Objectives

Objectives are specific statements that carry out a plan in the short term. Objectives are measurable benchmarks that can be used to assess incremental progress in achieving the broader purposes expressed in the goals. The objectives will be individually set forth in each section of the Comprehensive Plan.

PURPOSE

The Comprehensive Plan is authorized by the *West Virginia Code* Chapter 8A, Article 3. The purpose of preparing a Comprehensive Plan is to:

- (1) promote the coordinated development of land and improvements to meet the future needs of the county;
- (2) achieve sound planning to assist the governing body in preserving quality of life and enhancing that quality of life to adapt to the future needs of the county relating to economic, physical, or social changes;
- (3) promote the health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity, and general welfare of county residents; and,
- (4) promote efficiency and economy during the development process.

The Comprehensive Plan is a policy guide for the Tucker County Planning Commission and the Tucker County Commission as they assess the location, character, and the extent of future development for the county. The plan contains proposed policies and other recommendations to be implemented over time through a variety of decision-making actions including subdivision of land, and the location and construction of public infrastructure improvements, among other things. The Tucker County Comprehensive Plan was developed so that decisions affecting the county's lands should be made in a coordinated and responsible manner to capitalize on the county's geographic location and its desirable physical features.

The Comprehensive Plan shall set forth goals and objectives to allow an informed decision making process, ensure consistency in government, and coordinate the various arms of the local government. It will create conditions positive for vital resources, reduce resource waste relating to haphazard development and sprawl, preserve historic landmarks and other resources, and promote a sense of community character and identity. It will promote the most efficient utilization of available resources, coordinate development into well-planned communities, and advocate cost-effective development of facilities and services.

ORGANIZATION

The comprehensive plan organization follows the requirements of *West Virginia Code* §8A-3-4(c). Each section of the Comprehensive Plan addresses a requirement set forth in the West Virginia State Code. To insure that the comprehensive plan meets all the statutory requirements, the sections of the Comprehensive Plan systematically follow the requirements established within the State Code.

The only required component listed in the State Code that does not have a separate section within the comprehensive plan is Financing (§8A-3-4(c)12). Instead of writing a separate section that describes how the county intends to achieve financing for each of the other sections, the Comprehensive Plan contains a discussion concerning how the county hopes to achieve the financing within each section listed below.

PROCESS

The comprehensive planning process for Tucker County initially began in 1992 with the preparation of the original Comprehensive Plan. In 1995, the County worked with the Canaan Valley Institute (CVI) to redraft the Comprehensive Plan. In 2008, the Planning Commission continued the planning process with the forwarding of a survey to gain information from the residents. The Planning

Commission used the results of the survey as the input from the county residents in the development of the following revision to the Comprehensive Plan. A copy of the survey and a tabulation of the survey results are attached as appendices to this Comprehensive Plan.

With the construction of US Highway 48 (Corridor H), Tucker County may have the opportunity to experience growth and development that may affect its natural resources, and place a strain upon its ability to provide both community services and public facilities. While the new highway will provide economic benefits to the county, the road will also place increasing demands for utilities, transportation, infrastructure, and services that must be considered.

Faced with the prospect of development, the Tucker County Commission began the process of developing a Comprehensive Plan to help guide county growth for the next twenty years. The Tucker County Planning Commission worked with the West Virginia University Extension Service in an effort to update current Comprehensive Plan.

PLAN OBJECTIVES

Although many of the objectives of the comprehensive plan will be individually set forth in each of the following sections of the Comprehensive Plan, four main objectives exist. The primary objectives are discussed in the pertinent sections of the comprehensive plan. The four primary objectives of the comprehensive plan consist of the following:

1. Preparation for the arrival of U.S Route 48 (Corridor H)

As described in the Transportation Section, Tucker County will soon gain the benefit of a multi-billion dollar highway system commonly known as Corridor H or officially designated U.S. Route 48. The highway is now open from Wardensville, WV through Forman. The highway construction schedule projects completion of the link from Forman to Bismark by 2013. The section from Bismark to Davis is currently under final design. The section from Davis to Kernes is still in the design stage. As the new highway goes through its completion, it will have a dramatic effect on Tucker County.

The county continues to work with the West Virginia State Highway Department in order to find the means to achieve the maximum benefit from this new highway.

2. The Heart of the Highlands Trail Project

The Heart of the Highlands Trail System is a new concept in trail systems that will connect the multi-use trail systems of five land management agencies in Tucker County, into a comprehensive multi-use public trail system. This trail system will provide recreational trails the county and will enhance the area's recreation and economic possibilities.

The county supports the entities that are working to develop this project into its full potential.

3. High Speed Internet

Any business that wishes to either be competitive or remain competitive will need to access to broadband communications.

In order for Tucker County to attract or to retain businesses, the county must assist in providing the necessary infrastructure needed to allow users to establish a presence on the Information Superhighway.

Additionally, the county continues to work with the State of West Virginia and with the service providers in order to make broadband communications, including high-speed internet, available to its residents.

4. Marcellus Shale

The possible future production of natural gas via hydraulic fracturing techniques used on the Marcellus Shale formation that underlies Tucker County may yield significant economic as well as environmental impacts.

Although any drilling or production contracts that exist within the county will involve agreements between an extraction company, the mineral rights holders, and the surface land owners, the county is providing resources to assist the land owners with information needed in order to reach an informed decision before entering into such a contract.

TUCKER COUNTY LEVY ESTIMATE

Nothing within the Tucker County Comprehensive Plan is intended to conflict with the Tucker County Levy Estimate. The Levy Estimate serves as the Official Budget Document and remains the primary annual policy and planning document for the county. The Levy Estimate is prepared approved by the County Commission and prepared by the county Clerk in March of each year before being submitted to the West Virginia State Auditor's Office for approval. The Levy Estimate contains a description of all estimated of all revenues coming into the

county for the coming fiscal year (July 1 through June 30). The Levy Estimate also allocates how county revenues will be expended through the coming fiscal year. The Levy Estimate is reviewed by the county commission and updated by the County Clerk each December. It is then modified as necessary to track any changes in expenditures that occur throughout the year.

The Tucker County Comprehensive Plan is intended to supplement the Levy Estimate and serve as a multi-year narrative description for the expenditures contained within the Levy Estimate. Should the Levy Estimate begin to diverge from the Comprehensive Plan, the County Commission shall take steps to in order to bring both documents into agreement.

A MENDING THE TUCKER COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The Tucker County Comprehensive Plan is intended to remain a living document capable of adapting to changing circumstances within the county. As a result, the following procedures are in place to amend the Comprehensive Plan any should changes be needed to make the plan either more current or more effective.

The procedures for amending the Tucker County Comprehensive Plan shall be in compliance with the West Virginia Code (§8A-3-11). Amendments to the Tucker County Comprehensive Plan shall be drafted by the Tucker County Planning Commission. The proposed amendment shall contain the proposed wording change and shall provide reasoning for the proposed change. Subsequent to the drafting the proposed amendment, the Planning Commission shall hold a public hearing. After the public meeting, the planning commission will forward the amended plan to the County Commission for approval. The County Commission would then consider the approval of the amended plan in accordance with state code.

If approved, a copy of the amended Comprehensive Plan shall be posted on the county website, in the county courthouse, and in the county public libraries. It would replace the previous copy of the plan document available at those locations.

CURRENT SITUATION

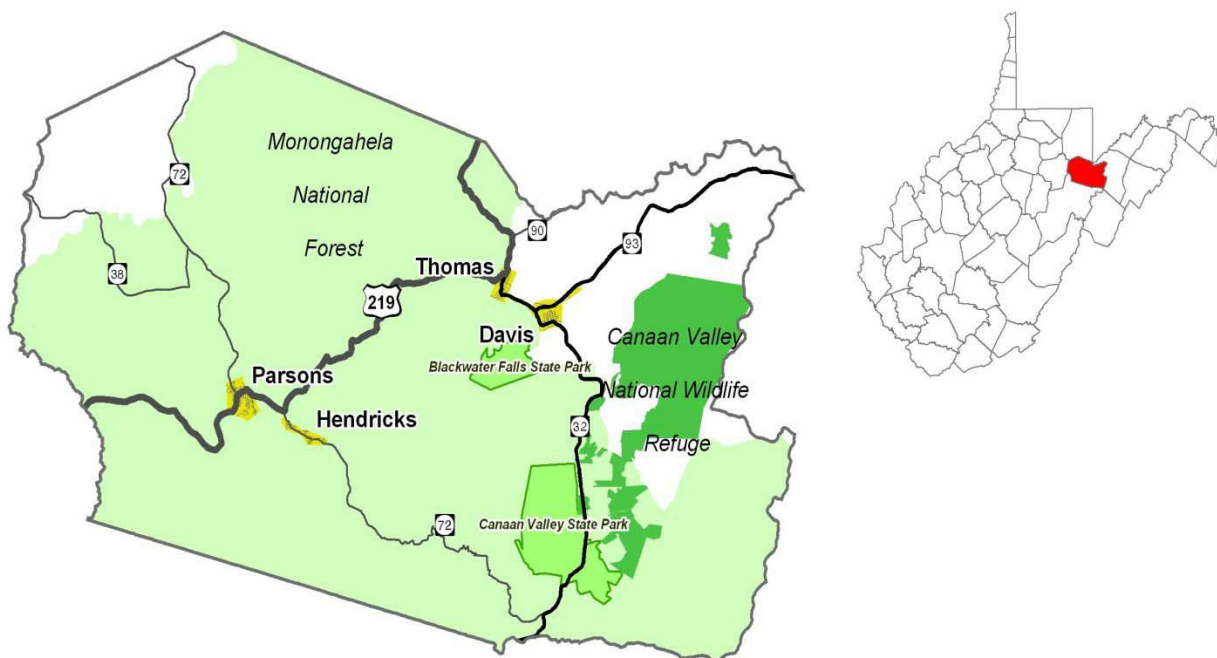
REGIONAL SETTING

Tucker County is located in the Potomac Highlands region of West Virginia just west of the Allegheny Front. Tucker County borders six counties – five in West Virginia and one in Maryland. The bordering counties are Randolph County to the south, Barbour County to the west, Preston County to the north, Garrett County, Md., to the northeast, Grant County to the east, and Pendleton County to the southeast.

Tucker County is approximately 421 square miles (including over 2 square miles of water area). The elevation of the county ranges from 4,420 feet at the top of Weiss Knob to 1,450 feet where the Cheat River crosses the Tucker/Preston county line.

The Tucker County seat is in Parsons. Other municipalities in Tucker County include Davis, Thomas, Hendricks, and Hambleton.

Figure 1 – Overview of Tucker County

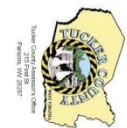


PHYSICAL LAND CONDITIONS

Tucker County is sparsely populated. The population of the county in the 2010 Census was 7,141, making the population density just under 17.5 persons per square mile. Only two counties in West Virginia have a lower population density. Those counties are Pocahontas County with a population density of 9.7 and Pendleton County with a population density of 11.7.

Existing Land Use

The Existing Land Use Map (Map 1) provided by the Tucker County Tax Assessor's Office illustrates the county's land development patterns. The map indicates how large sections of the county consist of forested land that is owned either by the State or by the Federal Government. (Please note that the parcel of land previously allocated to CVI has been transferred to the West Virginia DNR in July 2012. Usage restrictions with respect to this land now owned by CVI are in the process of being defined.)



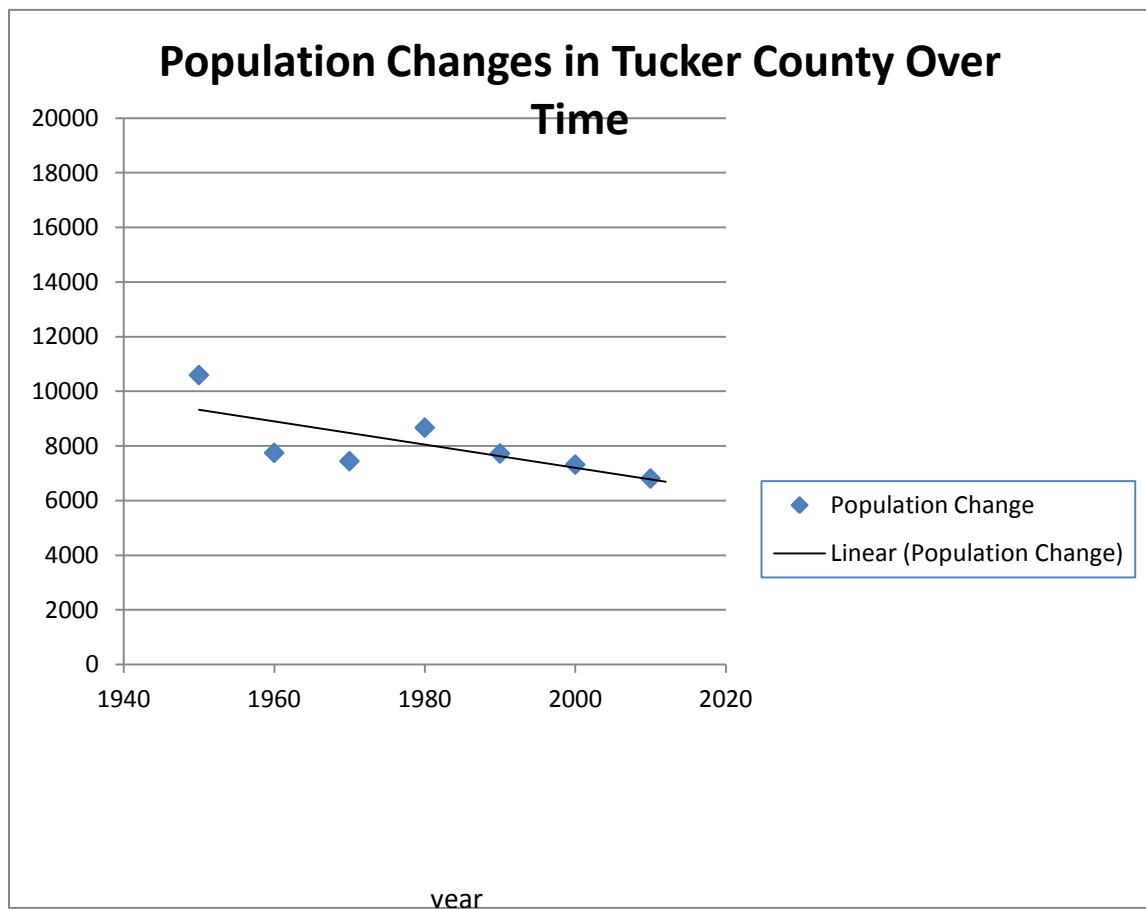
Tucker County Plan

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Population & Households

The 2010 census found the population of Tucker County to be 7141 residents. The county population reflects a decline for the past 100 years. The county population peaked in 1910 at 18,675. It fell between 1910 and 1920 and between 1920 and 1930. The population declined again after World War II until the county saw a population reversal with a substantial population jump between 1970 and 1980. Since 1980, the county experienced another steady decline in population.

Chart 1: Historical Chart of Tucker County Population Trends after WW II



Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

The county's rate of population decline is not expected to change. Instead, based upon population projections by WVU Bureau of Business and Economics Research (Tables 2 and 3), the ongoing decline in the Tucker County population is projected to continue through the next two decades.

Table 2: Comparative Population Change

	Tucker County	West Virginia	United States
1990 to 2000	-5.3%	0.8%	13.1%
2000 to 2010	-2.5%	2.5%	9.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

Table 3: Population Projections for Tucker County

	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
Population	7,137	7,129	7,704	6,930	6,722
Percent Change		-0.1%	-0.8%	-2.0%	-3.0%

Source: WVU BB&ER.

Age Structure

In addition to an overall population decline, the age of the average Tucker County resident is significantly higher than the national average. Over 20 percent of the Tucker County residents are over 65 years in age. In comparison, only 16 percent of West Virginia residents are over 65 years in age and only 13 percent of the U.S. residents are over 65 years in age.

The age distribution in a region is important for many planning applications. Education, social services, recreational facilities, and a host of other services and facilities must be considered for the various age groups. In addition, commercial and industrial establishments tend to locate to areas where the demographic makeup includes a youthful and skilled labor force.

Table 3. Tucker County Age Distribution

	Tucker County	West Virginia	USA
Persons under 5 years old, percent, 2010	4.6%	5.6%	6.5%
Persons under 18 years old, percent, 2010	19.2%	20.9%	24.0%
Persons 65 years old and over, percent, 2010	21.0%	16.0%	13.0%

Data from the U.S. Census Bureau

Education

Education plays a critical role in the economic viability of a community. For example, when searching for new locations or for plant expansions, businesses tend to scrutinize the percentage of high school and college graduates, the quality of the local schools, and the availability of worker-readiness programs.

The proportion of adults in Tucker County that are high school graduates and college graduates remains below the West Virginia average and the national average.

Table 4. Tucker County Education Statistics

	Tucker County	West Virginia	USA
High school graduates, percent of persons age 25+, 2006-2010	81.5%	81.9%	85.0%
Bachelor's degree or higher, pct of persons age 25+, 2006-2010	13.7%	17.3%	27.9%

Data from the 2010 American Community Survey

Income

According to the Census Bureau, average income levels in Tucker County remain below the West Virginia average and the national average. The census indicates that, the median annual family income for Tucker County was \$32,712 in the 2006-2010 period (in 2010 dollars).

Table 5. Tucker County Income Statistics

	Tucker County	West Virginia	USA
Persons per household, 2006-2010	2.28	2.42	2.59
Per capita income in past 12 months (2010 dollars) 2006-2010	\$20,020	\$21,232	\$27,334
Median household income, 2006-2010	\$32,712	\$38,380	\$51,914
Persons below poverty level, percent, 2006-2010	17.7%	17.4%	13.8%

Data from the U.S. Census Bureau, State and County Quick Facts

Conclusions

Although the Tucker County demographic profile indicates a county in decline, there are major forces for change that could reverse that trend.

1. The county will soon be served by a multi-billion dollar transportation corridor. The road carries the potential of providing a transportation route that will facilitate the transportation of goods and services and increase affluence within the county.
2. The county is in the process of developing a trail system that will connect non-motorized the trails within the county and facilitate an increase in tourism.
3. The county is working toward the installation of a fiber-optic cable system for improved high-speed internet access and broadband communications. The installation of a fiber backbone will provide county residents access to the information super-highway and will facilitate business development.
4. The county is seeing an influx of a young artisan community that can is contribute to a revitalization of the local municipalities.

LAND USE

OVERVIEW

This section develops the overall land use profile plan for Tucker County.

The overall land use profile for Tucker County shows that the County’s primary land use category is comprised of either forest land, agriculture land, or undeveloped land (257,612 acres). Of the three, forest land occupies the largest amount within this particular category. Agricultural land is relatively limited in Tucker County because of the prevailing rugged terrain. Much of the land base has remained underdeveloped because it is steep slope area and as such is not developable.

Park land occupies a total of 8,200 acres with the two state parks (Canaan Valley Resort and Blackwater Falls) accounting for the majority of this acreage. The remaining acreage is Camp Kidd, the YMCA Camp Horseshoe, and municipal parkland.

Residential development and housing occupy some 2,105 acres or less that 1 percent of the County’s total land area. More than half this acreage is to be found Canaan Valley where recreation-related and resort development has materialized over the past 25 years. The remaining residential development is largely concentrated in the county seat, the four towns, a series of settlement clusters, and some limited “strip” development along certain hollows and certain upland valleys. Commercial and industrial developments occupy a total of 151 and 66 acres respectively. Public land uses occupy a total of 50 acres. Each of these last three land use categories is to be found at scattered locations throughout the County. Thomas and Davis have limited amounts of commercial development. However, recreation-related commercial development is to be found along S.R. 32 and at certain resort complexes within Canaan Valley. The overall land use profile has not changed significantly in recent years, except for the influx of recreation residential development has taken place on large lots (one-, two-, and five--acre lots).

There are four major land owners in Tucker County:

Federal Government -- Monongahela National Forest	101,756 acres
Western Pocahontas Properties,Ltd.	40,000 acres
Federal Government -- Canaan Fish and Wildlife Refuge	16,070 acres
Canaan Valley and Blackwater Falls State Parks	8,726 acres

In total, over 53% of the county lands are federally owned and are non-taxable. Another 26% of the county lands fall under a subsidy and are subject to reduced taxation. As a result, only 20% of the land within the county serves to make up the tax base used to support county activities. Table 6 below serves to summarize the amount of land available to provide tax revenues to serve the county.

Table 6. Tucker County Land Use

	TAXABLE ACRES IN TUCKER COUNTY		
OWNERSHIP	ACRES	PERCENT ACRES OWNED	
NATIONAL FOREST	101,756	37.71%	
WILDLIFE REFUGE	16,070	5.95%	
STATE PARKS	8,726	3.23%	
NATURE CONSERVANCY	243	0.09%	
OTHER NON TAXABLE	14,290	5.30%	
WEST VIRGINIA DNR	3,223	1.19%	
TOTAL NON TAXABLE	144,307	53.47%	
MANAGED TIMBER	46,249	17.14%	
FARM LAND	26,183	9.70%	
TOTAL REDUCED	72,432	26.84%	
TOTAL NORMAL TAX BASE	53,130	19.69%	

Source: Tucker County Tax Assessor's Office, 2009 Tax Year

In general, existing land use in Tucker County can be divided among eight major categories: Urban Residential, Urban Commercial, Urban Industrial, Rural (agriculture residential/seasonal home, and commercial), Strip Mined Land, U.S. Forest Service Land, State Parks, and Undeveloped Land.

Land Use in Urban Areas

Urban areas in Tucker County are confined to the municipalities of Parsons, Davis, Thomas, Hendricks, and Hambleton. This land use category includes residential, commercial, and industrial areas that support intensive human activity. Residential land use includes both single-family and multi-family development, and the commercial land use in the identified urban areas includes both the retail and the limited industrial activities that take place in the towns within Tucker County.

Land use recommendations for the five municipalities are not included in the countywide plan in accordance with state code. To be included in the plan, municipalities would need to enact an ordinance adopting the Comprehensive Plan.

Parsons. The City of Parsons is the county seat. The city is located southwest quadrant of the County along the Dry Fork/Black Fork tributary of the Cheat River. It has a population of 1,485 in 2010.

Davis: The Town of Davis is located in the northeast quadrant of the County at the confluence of Beaver Creek and the Blackwater River. At 3,101 feet in elevation, Davis is the highest municipality in the State of West Virginia and has the coldest temperature recorded in the State. It has a population of 660 in 2010.

Thomas: the Town of Thomas has developed along the drainage of the north fork of the Blackwater River, just below its confluence with Glade Run. Situated in a deep, narrow river valley, Thomas is tightly-packed against the surrounding mountains. It has a population of 586 in 2010.

Hendricks and Hambleton: These two towns are located in the southwest quadrant of the County along the Dry Fork/Black Fork tributary of the Cheat River. Hendricks is located at the confluence of the Blackwater River with the Dry Fork, which forms the Black Fork River, and approximately 12 to 15 miles downstream from Davis. Hambleton is downstream of Hendricks on the Black Fork River just upstream from where Roaring Run joins the Black Fork River. In 2010, Hendricks has a population of 272 and Hambleton has a population of 232.

The primary urbanized areas in the county can be found along the major thoroughfares such as US Route 50 and WV Route 28 and at their intersection. Small commercial centers can be found along these roadways, consisting of one or more retail or service establishments to serve the local population. The distribution and location of growth in recent years has not always assured efficient delivery of public services as the development pattern has been widely dispersed.

Land Use in Canaan Valley

Land use in Canaan Valley has varied. In the early 1900s, the area was extensively logged for its large stands of cherry wood, and after being cleared, the valley bottom and gentle foothills were developed for farming. Later, the majority of the Valley was purchased by the Monongahela Power Company in anticipation of the construction of an electrical generating dam at the exit of the Blackwater River from the west valley wall (between Brown Mountain to the north and the Canaan Mountain ridge to the south). Later legislation concerning

the preservation of natural wetland resources, combined with the presence of rare floral and faunal species (possibly threatened or endangered), supported the transfer of a majority of Canaan Valley (and its watershed) to a national wildlife refuge.

The majority of new housing development has been in the seasonal home market. This influx of seasonal residents is directly related to the development of the ski area and golf course in Canaan Valley State Park and the vacation home construction adjacent to and in Canaan Valley. Residents of these developments are generally from outside Tucker County and do not have either family or long-standing ties to the existing communities. Associated commercial development is of the convenience nature and is designed to support the lifestyle of the transient resident. Seasonal home construction generates a certain level of construction jobs in the short run and results in predominantly service-oriented, seasonal jobs in the long run.

Presently, resort construction is concentrated in the southeast quadrant of the County, at the south end of Canaan Valley, and along WV Route 32 at the east side of Canaan Valley State Park. Numerous small developments of single-family homes and condominiums have sprung up to provide tourist/vacationer housing adjacent both Canaan Valley State Park and the Timberline Ski Area.

Publicly-Owned and Tax Exempt Land

The major constraint to development in Tucker County is the extent of land that is publicly and corporately owned. As stated above, the amount of land in national forests and state parks, combined with the two large blocks of land that are owned by Western Pocahontas (approximately 40,000 acres) limit's the areas of the county that can be considered for development.

In addition to the lack of "available" land, for development has imposed restrictions to construction. These restrictions include constraints imposed by soils, topography, and wetlands.

With respect to much of the federally owned land, the government provides the county with Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT). These federal payments help offset losses in property taxes due to nontaxable Federal lands within the county boundaries. PILT is provided from the Federal Government to the county in compensation for services such as those related to public safety, environment, housing, social services, and transportation. Payment is made directly to the eligible local government. Payments are made based on the number of acres of "entitlement lands." The majority of payments come from lands administered by National Forest System; the National Park System; BLM; the U.S. Army Corps of

Engineers, and some military installations. Payments are currently made at a rate of 0.75% of the market value of the land, 25% of the net receipts derived from the land, or \$0.75 per acre (whichever is greater). Although “full funding” is authorized for payments through 2012 under The Emergency Economic Stabilization Act of 2008 (PL 110-343), funds must be appropriated each year for actual payments. In 2011, Federal payments have been funded to 99% of the authorized levels.

1. Monongahela National Forest

The Monongahela National Forest is the largest landowner in Tucker County. The Monongahela National Forest owns over 101,000 acres or 37% of the total acreage within the county. The Monongahela National Forest came into existence around 1915 when the Federal Government began the process of purchasing the slash, cut, and burned slopes that have been left denuded by the aggressive logging methods of the late 1890s and early 1900s.

Because the Forest Service acquired land via “willing-seller” to “willing-buyer” transactions, the boundaries to the national forest are very irregular with a large number of “in holdings” (private land largely surrounded by national forest).

Since the Monongahela National Forest is a federal entity that exists within the Department of Agriculture, it participates in the PILT program described above.

2. Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge

The Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge is the second largest Federal landowner in Tucker County. The wildlife refuge owns 16,070 acres within Tucker County. Because the Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge is completely contained within Tucker County, the wildlife has a closer relationship to the county than it does with the national forest. The refuge manager, makes it a point to have monthly meetings with the county commission in order to keep the county up to date with all activities within the refuge.

Canaan Valley refuge was established when the Freeland Tract was purchased on September 11, 1994. Through various purchases between 1994 and 2001, the refuge slowly grew to just over 3,000 acres in size. In February 2002, the refuge acquired just under 12,000 acres from Allegheny Power Systems, including much

of the wetlands in the central part of the valley. This purchase brought the acreage of the refuge to 15,245 acres.

The refuge would like to continue to acquire acreage to the extent that the acreage contributes to the mission of the refuge and to the extent that the land acquisition serves to benefit the local community.

Because the Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge is a Federal entity in the same respect as the Monongahela National Forest, the wildlife refuge provides the county with payments in lieu of taxes via the same regulation as does the national forest. Although the Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge falls under a different Federal Agency than the Monongahela National Forest, the regulation that governs payments in lieu of taxes remains the same. Although, the payments made to the county from the wildlife refuge are as described above, the Department of the Interior (the Agency that oversees the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) may appraise property differently than the Department of Agriculture (the Agency that oversees the Forest Service). In addition, payments to the county will depend on the Agency budget appropriation. These appropriations may vary from Agency to Agency.

3. Canaan Valley and Blackwater Falls State Park

A third major governmental landowner within the county is the State of West Virginia. The State of West Virginia owns two major state parks within Tucker County, the Canaan Valley State Park and the Blackwater Falls State Park. These two state parks combine to comprise 8,726 acres within the county.

As a state entity, the state parks make no payments in lieu of property taxes to Tucker County. However, any concessionaires that operate within the state parks are required to pay personal property taxes on the property owned that individual concessionaire. In addition, the concessionaires pay the hotel tax on the hotel rooms, cabins, and campsites within the parks.

4. The West Virginia Division of Natural Resources

The West Virginia Division of Natural Resources recently accepted control of 3,070 acres of land that formerly was under control of the Canaan Valley Institute (CVI). Under the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources (WV-DNR), the property remains tax-exempt.

The WV-DNR entity that accepted the CVI holdings is separate from the WV State Park System. However, WV-DNR will operate much like the state parks in that it will make no payments in lieu of property taxes to Tucker County.

The majority of the land transferred to WV-DNR will remain under the oversight of the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) within the Federal Department of Commerce. Subsequent to the above described land transaction, CVI will own only the 36 acre parcel of the property where its headquarters building is located.

Privately-Owned Forest Land

The major owner of private forestland within Tucker County is the Western Pocahontas Timber Management Group. The timber management group owns approximately 40,000 acres within Tucker County. Although the Western Pocahontas Timber Management Group does pay property taxes on its land holdings, the property taxes for Western Pocahontas at the greatly reduced rate for managed timberland.

Western Pocahontas plans to continue to log its property in a manner consistent with its forestry plan. Although Western Pocahontas owns the mineral rights for its landholdings, the corporation does not own the oil and gas rights for its land. Therefore, they do not look forward to gas production from the oil shale.

Western Pocahontas has no current plans to sell any major tracts of its land.

Architectural Constraints to Development within Canaan Valley

The Tucker County Commission has found it advantageous to implement Architectural Constraints in the form of a Zoning Ordinance for buildings and structures within the Canaan Valley Region. The purpose of the architectural constraints is to segregate uses that are thought to be incompatible. The zoning is

used to prevent new development from interfering with existing residents or businesses and to preserve the "character" of a community.

A summary of the Canaan Valley Zoning Ordinance is included as an appendix to this comprehensive plan. A copy of the Zoning Ordinance is on file at the County Courthouse.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES & STRATEGIES

Goals Statement

Retain the rural character of the county by preserving natural, scenic, and open space resources; enhancing the tax base through development in appropriate locations; and assuring the continued desirability of the county as a place to live, work and play.

Objectives

- Identify growth areas, which are logical extensions of existing concentrations and insure that they have appropriate access and can be efficiently served by infrastructure systems.
- Encourage new development in the county in existing communities and growth areas.
- Discourage development in areas not suitable for on-site sewage disposal and which cannot feasibly be served by publicly-owned waste management.
- Encourage proper utilization of creek valleys, open areas, and steep slopes as open space.
- Encourage compact business development patterns along existing and new highways including the new U. S Highway 48 (Corridor H).
- Encourage suitable, attractive, and compatible commercial and office uses at appropriate locations, consistent with existing land use patterns, support services, and the transportation systems.
- Work to retain existing and attract new desirable businesses in the county, and foster the viability of commercial areas in the county through revitalization efforts and streetscape improvements.

Strategies

- Develop and adopt a countywide policy in collaboration with the public service districts, which describes and enforces the boundaries of water and sewer service extensions in these areas. (6-12 months)
- Develop and adopt a countywide growth management policy that identifies growth areas where the county will direct new development. New infrastructure systems should be emphasized in the growth areas so as to avoid rural sprawl development patterns. (12-18 months)
- Determine the necessity and advisability of implementing various forms of land use regulation, subject to approval by county voters. The purpose of the land use regulations will be to designate and preserve areas for industrial, commercial, residential, agricultural, recreational and other uses, with the goal of encouraging the use of land in a manner consistent with its most appropriate use. (24-36 months)

Partners and Potential Partners

- The Tucker County Commission develops, incorporates and implements any Architectural Constraints developed by the County.
- The Tucker County “Board of Zoning Appeals” established by the Tucker County Commission provides and administers the zoning regulations for the lands, water, and wetlands that comprise Canaan Valley and its surrounding watersheds that drain towards Canaan Valley.

Fiscal Considerations

- Use funding streams appropriated by the County Commission.
- Seek additional county general revenues.
- Seek infrastructure grants wherever available
- Charge appropriate service/permit/application fees for new and existing activities.
- Seek financial contributions/assistance from external entities participating in work within the county.

HOUSING

OVERVIEW

In Tucker County, 78.3 percent of the residences are occupied by owners. Renter-occupied units made up the remaining 21.7 percent of the housing. The age of the housing stock was relatively old, with 60.4 percent built before 1950.

Tucker County household sizes have changed. In 1970, Tucker County's average household size was 3.25 persons, at present that number has fallen to 2.77.

A summary of housing statistics is provided below. Of the statistics, the most noticeable is the significantly high vacancy rate (43%). Much of the vacancy rate can be explained by the large number of second houses that exist within the county.

HOUSEHOLDS BY TYPE	□□□□□□□□	□□□□□□□□
Total households	3,057	100.0
Average family size	2.77	
HOUSING OCCUPANCY	□	□
Total housing units	5,346	100.0
Occupied housing units	3,057	57.2
Vacant housing units	2,289	42.8
For rent	123	2.3
Rented, not occupied	48	0.9
For sale only	64	1.2
Sold, not occupied	37	0.7
For seasonal, recreational, or occasional use	1,659	31.0
All other vacants	358	6.7
HOUSING TENURE	□	□
Occupied housing units	3,057	100.0
Owner-occupied housing units	2,458	80.4
Population in owner-occupied housing units	5,708	-
Average household size of owner-occupied units	2.32	-
Renter-occupied housing units	599	19.6
Population in renter-occupied housing units	1,291	-
Average household size of renter-occupied units	2.16	-

Figures Provided by U.S. Census Bureau

GOALS, OBJECTIVES & STRATEGIES

Goals Statement

Retain the rural character of the county by preserving natural, scenic, and open space resources; enhancing the tax base in appropriate locations; and assuring the continued desirability of the county as a place to live, work and play.

Objectives

- Identify growth areas, which are logical extensions of existing concentrations of development.
- Encourage new development in the county in existing communities and growth areas.
- Discourage development in areas not suitable for on-site sewage disposal and which cannot feasibly be served by publicly owned waste management.
- Encourage proper utilization of creek valleys, open areas, and steep slopes as open space.
- Encourage compact business development patterns along U.S. Highway 48 (Corridor H).
- Recognize the variety of housing needs of county residents.

Strategies

- Develop and adopt a countywide policy in collaboration with the public service districts, which describes and enforces the boundaries of water and sewer service extensions in these areas. (6-12 months).
- Determine the necessity for and advisability of implementing various forms of land use regulation, subject to approval by county voters, to designate and preserve areas for industrial, commercial, residential, agricultural, recreational and other uses, with the goal of encouraging the use of land in a manner consistent with its most appropriate use. (24-36 months)

Partners and Potential Partners

- The Tucker County Commission develops, incorporates and implements any constraints developed by the County.

Fiscal Considerations

- Use funding streams appropriated by the County Commission.
- Seek additional county general revenues.
- Charge appropriate service/permit/application fees for new and existing activities.
- Seek financial contributions/assistance from external entities with whom work is jointly done.

TRANSPORTATION

OVERVIEW

The primary transportation consideration for Tucker County focuses around the construction of Corridor H (which has been officially designated U.S. Route 48).

Tucker County is located in north-central West Virginia. The county is centrally located within one day's drive of half the population of the county. Driving distances to some of the nearest major metropolitan areas from Parsons consist of the following (mileage according to Mapquest):

Pittsburgh, PA 135 miles,
 Charleston, WV, 156 miles,
 Washington, DC 192 miles,
 Baltimore, MD, 230 miles,
 Richmond, VA, 234 miles,
 Columbus, OH, 263 miles,
 Cleveland, OH, 263 miles,
 Philadelphia, PA, 326 miles,
 Virginia Beach, VA, 338 miles,
 Cincinnati, OH, 345 miles,
 Raleigh, NC 347 miles,
 Charlotte, NC, 376 miles,
 New York, NY, 395 miles.

Although the completion of U.S. Highway 48 (Corridor H) will not appreciably alter the travel distances, the new road will shorten some of the driving times by up to 45 minutes.

In addition to the coming U.S. Route 48, Tucker County is currently served by the following federal and state highways:

- 1) U.S. Route 33 traverses an east-west corridor 5 to 10 miles south of the Tucker County line. This route links the county to Buckhannon to the Interstate 79 corridor to the west and to Petersburg and then by West Virginia. 55 to the Interstate 81 and Interstate 66 corridors to the east.
- 2) U.S. Route 50 traverses an east-west corridor 5 to 10 miles north of the Tucker County line.

- 3) U.S. Route 250 traverses a north-south corridor 8 to 18 miles west of the Tucker County line.
- 4) U.S. Route 219, which follows a north-south alignment from Pocahontas through Elkins into Tucker County and then a southwest-northeast alignment through the County; this route continues northward to reach both the I-68 corridor and the Pennsylvania Turnpike.

The construction and maintenance of public roadways in West Virginia have been a function of the West Virginia Division of Highways since 1933.

SCENIC BY-WAYS

The State of West Virginia designated the route that runs from U.S. Route 219 from Parsons up to WV Route 32 and back along WV Route 72 as the Monongahela Scenic By-Way. The route may receive a possible future designation as a Federal Scenic By-Way.

GENERAL ACCESSIBILITY/IMPACT ON LOCAL AREA DEVELOPMENT

Tucker County is located in heavily mountainous terrain that, in the past, has been relatively inaccessible. Prior to the construction of U.S. Highway 48 (Corridor H), Tucker County existed far from interstate highway corridors. Transportation routes to and from the county have been along narrow and winding mountain highways.

The limited highway accessibility posed two problems for the county. Firstly, general inaccessibility limited economic development potential and job opportunities. Specifically, the rugged terrain and prevailing floodplains within Tucker County sharply reduce the number of sites that might be available for industrial development because shipments of intermediate and/or finished manufactured goods require significant time and expense to transport. Secondly, Tucker County residents found themselves limited by where they can commute to work because certain employment centers were too far from their homes.

The expansion of the tourism industry in Tucker County placed emphasis on the need for improvement of Tucker County's general accessibility and its internal highway and road network. Despite Canaan Valley's relatively poor access, major resort and seasonal residential development has occurred. The scenic values, the quality, and the diversity of recreation resources in the local area have attracted large numbers of individuals and families, largely from the mid-Atlantic region. However, the tourism industry is highly dependent on the regional and local transportation network for its continued success.

MAJOR HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENTS

The coming new Corridor H (which has been officially designated U.S. Route 48) has the potential to improve the general accessibility of Tucker County. The corridor is a part of

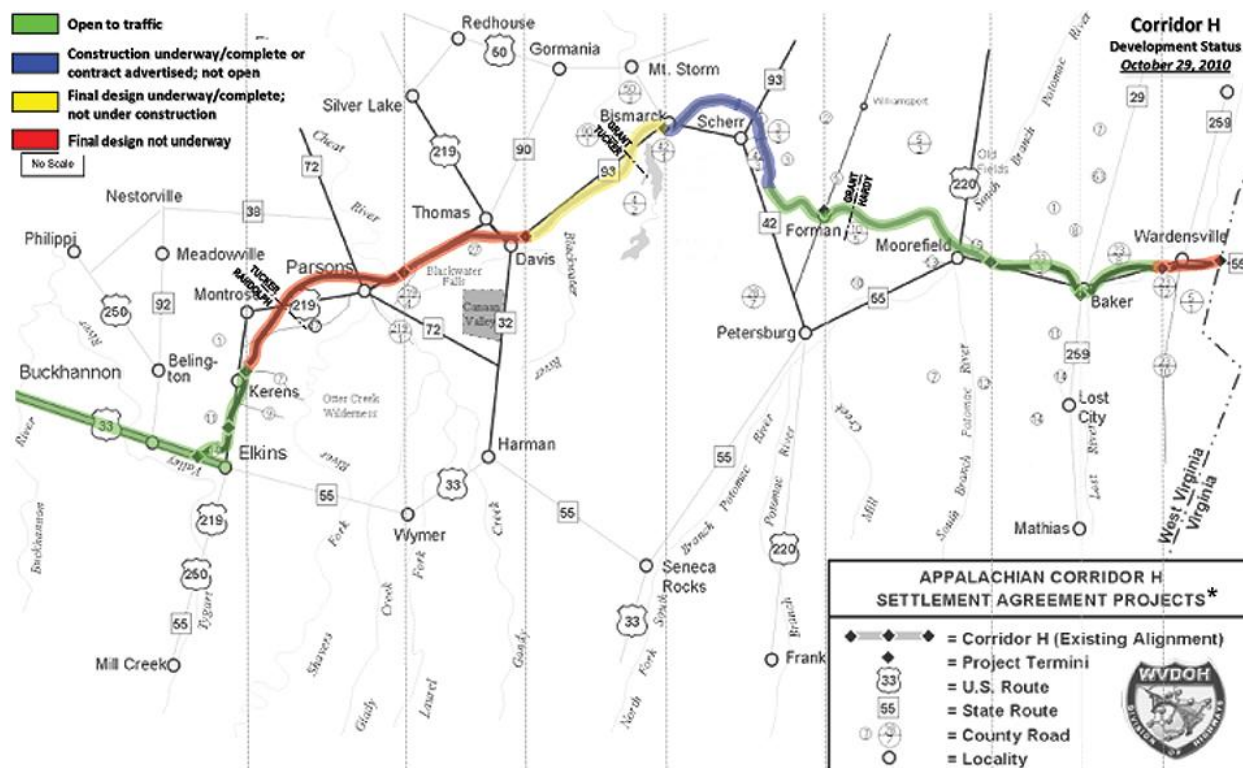
the Appalachian Regional Commissions' Appalachian Development Highway System and will provide a four-lane highway between Interstate 81 in Front Royal, VA Virginia and Interstate 79 to the west.

The completion of the corridor will link the state capital, Charleston, with the Washington-Baltimore area (via Interstate 66) and will benefit Tucker County in several ways. The new highway will greatly enlarge the number of potential industrial sites and enhance their development. The highway will significantly shorten the commuting time for Tucker County residents to outside places of employment and employment centers. The Corridor will make Canaan Valley much more accessible to out-of-state tourists from the east coast, the mid-south, and the Midwest. Finally, the new road will make certain upland sections in the middle of the County more accessible for development.

This particular highway improvement project is a high priority item with the State of West Virginia and is scheduled to have a direct impact into Tucker County by 2013.

A copy of the planned construction map (with projected completion dates) is shown below as Map2.

Map 2. Corridor H in Tucker County



Map is Courtesy of the West Virginia Division of Highways

GOALS, OBJECTIVES & STRATEGIES

Goals Statement

The county must plan for an orderly transition to the increased interstate transportation effectiveness that will be available when with Corridor H (route 48) enters into Tucker County. In addition, the county should plan a circulation system comprised of road, transit, and pedestrian facilities, which will allow safe and efficient vehicular and pedestrian travel throughout Tucker County.

Objectives

- Work with WVDOT on the orderly design and construction of exits and access routes to facilitate the highest and best use of the new U.S. Highway 48 (Corridor “H”).
- Coordinate land use and road improvement policies.
- Preserve and improve the capacity of the existing roads within the area as future development occurs through cooperative efforts with developers and WV Department of Transportation.
- Assure adequate access management occurs along major road corridors
- Facilitate pedestrian circulation within the community business areas through such means as benches, landscaping, and other pedestrian amenities.
- Preserve the natural scenic quality of Tucker County while providing sufficient transportation systems consistent with the county’s present and long-term needs.
- Encourage the development of trails linking residential areas to open spaces, and recreation resources located within or adjoining such developments.

Strategies

- Work with the County Transportation Committee to advocate for the implementation of the road and safety improvements recommended in the WV Division of Highways plans on Corridor H within the next five years. (Immediately).
- Conduct a corridor management study of Corridor H route to determine the highest and best use of land and to evaluate the need for development standards such as access management. (12-48 months)

Partners and Potential Partners

- The Tucker Count Commission develops, provides county funding and works with the West Virginia Department of Transportation with respect to the coordination of transportation issues.

- The West Virginia Department of Transportation provides the design, funding, and seeks matching Federal Funds for transportation routes within the county.
- The Federal Highways Administration specifies provides matching funds for road construction and establishes design constraints for all transportation routes that are part of the National Highway System.

Fiscal Considerations

- Seek local funding to enhance WV DOH road improvement projects.
- Explore impact/development fees to augment existing revenue streams.

INFRASTRUCTURE

OVERVIEW

The County infrastructure is provided by or administered by various external entities. The county infrastructure consists of the following:

- Roads,
- Electrical power,
- Telecommunications Services,
- Public Water,
- Public sewerage disposal,
- Solid Waste Disposal

Roads

Roadway systems have been discussed under the Transportation Section of this plan. The main feature needing discussion with respect to roadways will be the planned extension of Corridor H (officially designated U.S. Route 48) into the county.

Electrical Power

Allegheny Energy Inc is a regulated utility that provides electrical power to the residents throughout the region through Monongahela Power (the service area provider). Allegheny energy serves the customers as a regulated monopoly. While the States of Maryland and Pennsylvania have deregulated the purchase of electric power and allow electric customers to choose the company that generates or supplies your electricity, no such option exists within West Virginia.

Telephone Service

Frontier Telephone is a regulated utility that provides telephone service for county residents. Current landline telephone coverage comes through a copper wire distribution system. Frontier states that they have with no plans to upgrade to fiber optic cables in the immediate future.

Various cellular telephone providers provide spotty telephone coverage to the county and the neighboring regions.

Public Water

The existing level of public utility service is a limiting factor that impacts significantly the development of land in Tucker County. Many of the systems in the County are at or near capacity. In other areas, utilities simply do not exist.

Davis, Parsons, and Thomas provide municipal water services. Meanwhile, the Hamrick Public Service District (PSD) serves Hambleton, Hendricks, Bretz, Blackman Flats, Holly Meadows, St. George, Leadmine, and Shaffer.

Water service in Thomas is in relatively good condition and is using less than 50 percent of the system's capacity, currently serving 350 customers. The Hamrick PSD's water system is also in good condition and has excess capacity; it currently serves 425 water customers.

The water system at Davis is in poor condition with no excess capacity and a leakage problem. This system supplies 435 households and both the Blackwater Falls State Park and the State Correctional Institute, which together use 25 percent of the system's capacity. Davis has been awarded a grant of \$500,000 by the West Virginia Governor's Office of Development to upgrade its water system.

Parsons' water system is also in need of upgrading as it is near capacity and unable to meet turbidity standards at either of its source locations. The Parsons system is now serving 809 customers within the city limits, as well as Kingsford Charcoal just outside the city limits.

Canaan Valley State Park has a water plant for its own use, which draws water from the Blackwater River. It has a pump capacity of 200 gallons per minute (gpm) and is more than adequate for the current usage.

Water elsewhere in the County is obtained from wells. In Canaan Valley, private developers have installed small systems supplied by one or more wells to service individual developments.

WASTEWATER TREATMENT

Public Sewage Disposal capability varies dependent upon location. In Parsons, Davis, and Thomas, sewage disposal is handled through the municipality. Many of the county residents not living in those locations must rely on a private septic system for sewage disposal.

Parsons has a reconstructed treatment plant built to replace facilities destroyed in the 1985 flood. This system has substantial excess capacity that might be used to address deficiencies in adjacent areas. In other areas, wastewater treatment problems in Tucker County are a major obstacle to future development. The Town of Davis has a 6.5-acre stabilization pond that is functioning at capacity. At various times, proposals have been made to tie the Hamrick PSD service area into

the Parsons Treatment plan; however, the estimated expense of \$2.4 million has been the obstacle to these plans.

Also, in the development known as Blackman Flats near the Bretz area between Parsons and Hambleton, a septic system was installed by the original developer of the property. This system is not functioning properly.

In many areas of the county, centralized treatment facilities are not cost effective due to the dispersed nature of development. It is essential, however, that if increased development is to occur within Tucker County, shortcomings in the area of public utilities need to be addressed.

Canaan Valley Public Service District

In an effort to improve water and wastewater service in the resort areas in the Canaan Valley area, the Tucker County Commission authorized the creation of Canaan Valley Public Service District in November 2006. The West Virginia Public Service Commission granted approval for the creation of Canaan Valley Public Service District to provide water and sewage services within Canaan Valley in May 2007.

The goal of the Canaan Valley Public Service District was the consolidation of as many of the existing packaged wastewater treatment plants as possible into three or four decentralized treatment facilities. There were 17 small "Package Treatment Plants" serving the various small developments in Canaan Valley that were old, inefficient, and in disrepair. Water quality standards are becoming more stringent and sewage plant treated discharge, (effluent), were coming under increasing scrutiny by state and federal agencies.

As a result, the Public Service District provided two new treatment plants. Zone C is the new Timberline Plant and services everything the old plant handled some extra capacity for future expansion. Zone D is in the north part of the valley at Northlake and will consolidate the "Package Plants" serving Northpoint, Beaver Ridge, Black Bear and Northlake.

SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT FACILITIES

Solid Waste Management in Tucker County is done through the Tucker County Solid Waste Authority. It owns and operates the Tucker County landfill as allowed under state law (*West Virginia Code* §22C-4-3) The Tucker County Solid Waste Authority sets as its priority the continued development of the Tucker

County landfill into a well designed, properly managed, and financially stable facility in full regulatory compliance with the solid waste rules of the State of West Virginia and other pertinent laws and statutes. The Authority seeks to provide the citizens and businesses of Tucker County and the neighboring counties with viable solutions to their solid waste disposal problems.

1. Solid Waste Collection and Disposal Facilities

Solid waste collection services exist for all of Tucker County. All households in the county are required to demonstrate that they have disposed of their solid waste in a legal manner. Residents can demonstrate legal waste disposal either by subscribing to a trash removal service or by showing landfill receipts.

The municipalities of Parsons, Hendricks, Hambleton, Thomas and Davis provide curbside pick-up for their residents while Sunrise Sanitation Services provides private contract collection for rural residents and businesses.

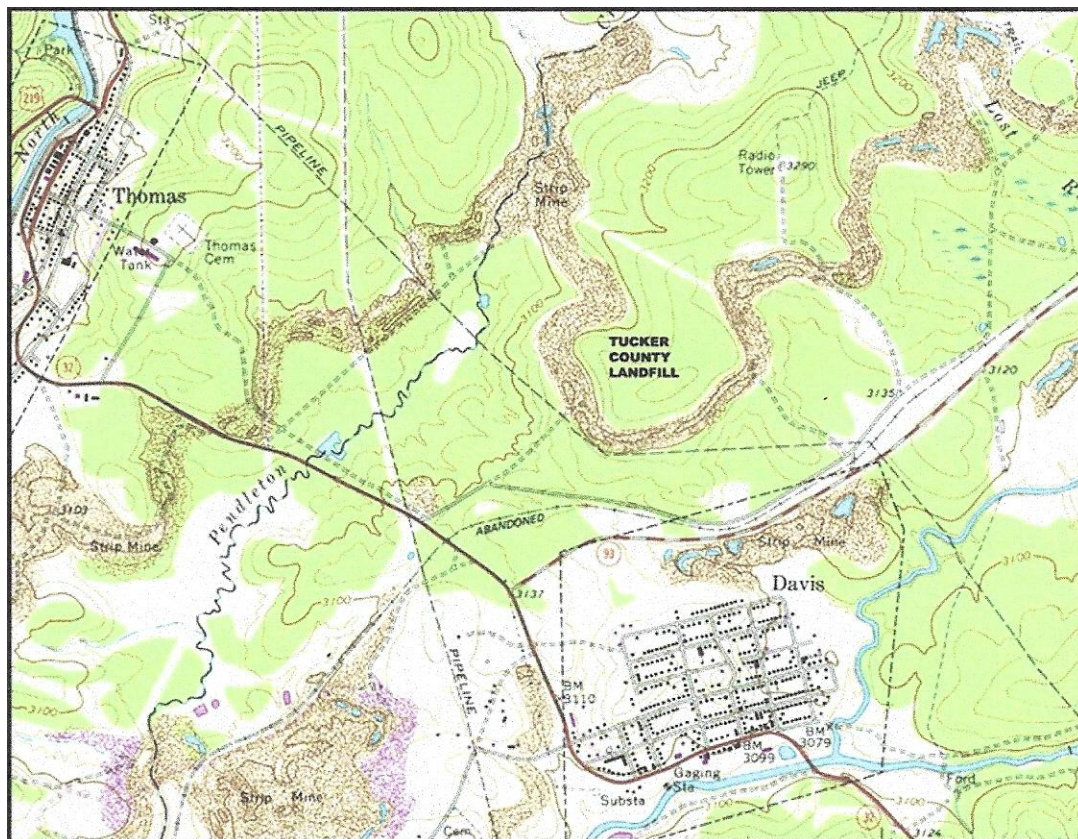
2. Landfill Facilities

The Tucker County Solid Waste Authority operates a landfill that is located east of Pendleton Creek and north of WV Route 32 in Davis. The facility began operation in 1989. It is open weekdays and accepts solid waste, construction debris, and certain sludges. The landfill does not accept hazardous wastes and has implemented a rigorous waste screening program to preclude any such materials from making their way, either intentionally or inadvertently, into the landfill.

The Tucker County landfill uses double composite lined cells with a phased approach to new cell construction such that a new five-to-six acre cell is constructed about every five years or as needed. The existing operational permit covers the operation of six landfill cells, five of which are currently inactive. The permitted area covers of 59.7 acres of which 30.4 acres is occupied by the six landfill cells with a 72 acre tract of land contiguous to the current landfill for future expansion. Cell construction is financed by tipping fee receipts and bank loans.

In 2010, the Tucker County Landfill received 66,056 tons of waste. Of this amount, 11% came from Tucker County. The remaining waste was transported from Grant County, Hampshire County, Hardy County, Mineral County, Pendleton County, Preston County, Randolph County, and Garrett County, MD.

A map of the Tucker County landfill is shown below:



Map provided by the Tucker County Solid Waste Authority

3. Recycling Activities

The Tucker County Solid Waste Authority operates a limited recycling program consisting of tires and various metals. As part of the program, 38 tons of metal were recycled in 2010.

In addition, Sunrise Sanitation operates a drop-off recycling site in Thomas, Parsons, and Canaan Valley. The Sunrise Sanitation Site collects cardboard, office paper, newspaper, phone books, magazines, catalogs, aluminum cans, steel cans, and used oil.

P_LANNING CONTEXT

Infrastructure is important in the County Planning in the aspect of situating the various types of land use throughout the county. Large densities of people should be centered on the more developed infrastructure networks and likewise, lack of infrastructure should reflect a more rural setting.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, & STRATEGIES

Goals Statement

Allow Tucker County access to safe drinking water, adequate sanitation, safe transportation, reliable electric power, high speed telecommunications, and other infrastructure needs of the county.

Objectives

- Work jointly with state, federal, and private entities to promote and develop high speed and wireless forms of data transmission and telecommunication through the county.
- Facilitate the county infrastructure committee to ensure its progress and vitality into the future.
- Pursue water and sewer projects to benefit currently un-served and under-served areas of the county, or areas that may need served due to health or quality issues.

Strategies

- Encourage continued and improved communication and coordination among the entities, agencies, and organizations involved in providing infrastructure and related services. (6-12 months)
- Undertake an aggressive approach to the development of high tech, high speed, and wireless data transmission and telecommunications through government and private sector joint ventures thus creating economic development possibilities while providing low cost service to the general public. (12-18 months)
- Ensure water and sewer projects are actively pursued in development and funding to guarantee projects reach construction. (12-36 months)
- Commingle projects for cost benefit in funding opportunities and construction feasibility. (12-36 months)

Partners and Potential Partners

- The Tucker County Commission provides funding and approves any authorities that operate within the county.
- Tucker County Solid Waste Authority owns and operates the Tucker County landfill.
- The Canaan Valley Public Service District oversees public utility use within Canaan Valley.

Fiscal Considerations

- Use funding streams appropriated by the County Commission.
- Seek additional county general revenues.
- Charge appropriate service/application/permit and related fees for new and existing activities.
- Grants, user fees, and charges for services provided.
- Seek financial contributions/assistance from external entities with whom work is jointly done.
- Explore impact/development fees to augment existing revenue streams.

PUBLIC SERVICES

OVERVIEW

County public services are delivered by various entities and organizations. These public services consist of the following:

Police Protection,
Fire Protection,
Education,
Health Care,
Emergency Services, and
Social Services

Police Protection

Police protection in Tucker County is provided by the county sheriff and his deputies operating out of Parsons. The West Virginia State Police also maintains an office in Parsons. The City of Parsons also maintains a police force of one person. The combined staff of these three organizations has a formidable task patrolling for an area the size of Tucker County. At times, only one sheriff's deputy and one state patrol are on duty to cover the entire 419 square miles of Tucker County outside Parsons Corporation limits. The sheriff's department and West Virginia State Police also provide protection for Thomas, Davis Hendricks, and Hambleton.

The sheriff's department is also limited by having only two patrol cars. A new radio system has been installed in both patrol vehicles to eliminate "dead spots" in the County where deputies cannot be reached by radio.

In terms of jail facilities, Tucker County prisoners must be transported to and from the Tygarts Valley Regional Jail for court appearances.

Fire Protection

Fire protection in Tucker County is provided by four independent volunteer fire departments. These are located at Parsons, Thomas, Davis and Canaan Valley. All four fire departments are also equipped to provide rescue services. All these departments are highly rated by the West Virginia Fire Administrator.

The largest of these departments both in terms of equipment and in area of coverage is the Parsons Fire Department, which is responsible for fire protection throughout most of Tucker County's western half. The department's area of responsibility is defined by the county line on the south, west, and north areas of its district and by splitting the distance between Parsons and Thomas and Canaan Valley departments on the east side.

Fire department and their services are rated on a scale of 1 to 10 with one being the best. through the Insurance Services Office of Commercial Risk Service, commonly referred to as ISO ratings. Categories considered in the ratings include manpower, training, equipment, water supply, and communications. In rural areas, dual ratings are given for areas with and without access to fire hydrants. Parsons and Canaan Valley each have an ISO rating of 6 in areas with hydrants and a 9 in those without. The Thomas Fire Department has an ISO rating of 8 in areas with hydrants and a 9 in areas without. It should be noted that 9 is the best rating obtainable for areas without hydrants unless a supplementary water supply is available.

The Tucker County 911 Communications Center provides dispatching services for all fire departments.

Funding for fire protection services in Tucker County mostly comes from donations raised by the efforts of the individual fire departments and some funding provided by taxes. While these departments provide primary fire protection to the Monongahela National Forest areas within Tucker County, little direct contribution is made to their operating budgets either by the National Forest Service or by the County Commission from revenues obtained as Payment In Lieu of Taxes (PILT).

Tucker County experiences three problems in terms of fire protection, which are all typical of most rural areas. First, as a volunteer fire service, response times are slower than they might be if the fire fighting staff was paid. Second, only a limited area of the County has fire hydrants. In those areas the capacity of the fire department to suppress fires is limited by the amount of water that can be carried on the trucks or can be obtained from nearby streams and ponds. Finally, there are a number of areas in the County that are beyond the maximum insurable distance of six miles from a firehouse. The northwestern sectors of the County in the Licking and St. George magisterial districts are the largest of these areas that are not adequately served.

As in the case with other services, West Virginia state policy is to encourage the consolidation of smaller service providers into a single, county-wide organization known as a County Fire Board.

Education

The Tucker County Board of Education maintains the following educational facilities within the county:

- Davis Thomas Elementary School is a prekindergarten to eighth grade school located in Davis/Thomas.
- Tucker Valley Elementary School is a prekindergarten to eighth grade school located in Hambleton.
- Tucker County High School is located on backbone Mountain .

The Tucker County High School is a school that educates students from grades 9 through 12. In the Tucker County High School, Career and Technical programming curriculums are available as well basic education classes. In addition, the Tucker County High School hosts a Virtual college campus provided by Eastern West Virginia Community and Technical College and serves to provide some adult classes.

Over the past 40 years, enrollment in the Tucker County High School declined. System enrollment in the 1973-1974 school year was 1,910 students. In 1989-1990, enrollment had declined to 1,428 students. By 2009-2010, enrollment was 1,096 students with a continued drop off in 2010-2011 to 1,054 students.

The following chart describes the enrollment in Tucker County Schools by school year:

School enrollment	2001-2	2002-3	2003-4	2004-5	2005-5	2006-07	2007-8	2008-9	2009-10	2010-11
Davis Thomas Elementary	243	235	243	239	219	191	200	197	202	189
Tucker Valley Elementary	605	611	610	621	586	564	571	556	543	547
Tucker County High	371	353	353	337	401	398	384	374	352	318
Totals	1219	1199	1206	1197	1206	1153	1155	1127	1097	1054

Data provided by the Tucker County Board of Education

The Kenneth “Honey” Rubenstein Juvenile Center

Another educational facility within Tucker County is the Kenneth “Honey” Rubenstein Juvenile Center. The Rubenstein Center works with delinquent individuals and focuses on a mission to provide an atmosphere of leadership and mutual respect that encourages positive behavior and demonstrates care and

concern for self and others. The center provides cadets with the knowledge and skills necessary to lead a law abiding, productive and responsible life.

The Rubenstein Center Legislature was first created in 1955 as the West Virginia Forestry Camp for Boys. The name was later changed to the Davis Center in 1975. The initial purpose of the center was to provide an inmate labor force to build Blackwater Falls State Park. Until 1978, residents of the Davis Center were sent from the courts for status offenses as well as for being adjudicated delinquent. After 1978, the facility only housed adjudicated residents and became the state's only minimum security correctional facility for juvenile males, as it still stands today.

Currently the Rubenstein Center, offers educational and vocational classes. While there, residents may receive their High School Diploma or the GED, as well as state and national certifications in both welding and building construction.

Libraries

Library services in Tucker County consist of two independently operated libraries, each with its own board of directors and staff. These libraries are: the Five Rivers Public Library in Parsons and the Mountaintop Public Library in Thomas. Both libraries depend heavily on state and local funding. Due to funding requirements each the library's Board of Trustees, Friends of the Library and staff have various fundraisers throughout the year and apply for local, state, and private grants. Both libraries belong to a library consortium, Northern Library Network, which includes 18 counties.

Technical support is offered by the West Virginia Library Commission (WVLC), which has highly increased the use of both libraries, especially Internet access. The commission provides library users access to many online databases, magazine articles, newspapers and encyclopedias.

According to the WVLC 2010 Statistical Report, Tucker County's circulating material per capital was 3.15 and visits per capita 2.70. Furthermore, the local tax-based income per capita was \$4.07.

The Five Rivers Public Library serves the communities of Parsons, St. George, Hambleton, Hendricks, Dryfork, Leadmine, Limestone, Location, Porterwood, Pifer Mountain, Montrose, Licking, Moore, and surrounding areas beyond Tucker County. The library's service population is 4,136. The library has a collection of 15,959 volumes, including audio, videos, DVDs, periodicals, and magazines. Eight public access computers are available for Internet and software programs. Wireless Internet is available at no cost to the public using their personal laptop. Programming includes Pre-School Story Time Class, Summer Reading, and Adult Book Club discussion group. Available on Microfilm is the local newspaper, *The*

Parsons Advocate, and census records. Services available are copies, faxes, laminate, and an AccuCut machine. The library has outgrown the current facility, a building opened in 1973 with an expansion in 1985. The Board of Trustees has current plans of a building expansion project of 1,600 square feet in 2012, which will include a much needed meeting room.

The Mountaintop Public Library serves the communities of the Thomas, Davis, the Canaan Valley and surrounding areas such as Benbush, Douglas, Coketon, Pierce, and William. The library's service population is 3,185. It has a collection of 7,058 books, videos, DVDs, periodicals and magazines. It has a small reference collection, children's and young adult collection. It also houses a moderate collection of West Virginia history. Services include copy machine, printer, and a fax machine. Public computers are available and free wireless for those patrons with laptops. Programming includes pre-schooler story hour and a book club for adults. For FY 2010, circulation was 7,059 materials and there were 5,662 library visits.

Adult Education

The Thomas Education Center

The Thomas Education Center supports adult education within Tucker County. It provides educational and cultural opportunities to students of all ages and backgrounds in the isolated areas of Tucker, Grant, Randolph and Preston Counties. The center offers a variety of education, technical, and life-enrichment courses throughout the year. Currently, they are offering computer courses, web design courses, and photography courses. The center is set up to respond to the desires and needs of the local community and provide classes on request.

The Thomas Education Center houses the Thomas Volunteer Fire Department /*Future Generations WV* Computer Lab. This computer lab is a statewide effort to make computers and the internet accessible to rural West Virginia families. This opportunity is made possible by the *West Virginia Broadband Opportunities Program* with support from the *2009 American Recovery and reinvestment Act*.

Finally, the Thomas Education Center offers adult physical education in the form of yoga classes in the auditorium. The program has proven to be highly successful and the number of active participants continues to grow.

Tucker County Board of Education Offices

The Tucker County Board of Education Offices provides free, individualized, backup education classes at the Board of Education office. Classes cover basic literacy skills, job readiness skills, test preparation assistance, life coping skills, and computer literacy. Instruction may be through books, videos, computer,

individual activities and/or group activities. The purpose of the class is to help each student achieve their personal goal(s) through the best method available.

Health Care and Emergency Services

1. Emergency Medical Services

The Tucker County Emergency Ambulance Authority provides pre-hospital emergency care in Tucker County. The Tucker County Ambulance Authority provides ambulance transport to the citizens and visitors of Tucker County. In addition, the ambulance authority has mutual aid agreements with neighboring counties and providing the ability for mutual assistance as needed. Annually, the ambulance authority responds to approximately 1,500 calls for help including mutual aid with the local fire departments.

Funding for ambulance service is provided primarily by charging a user's fee for services rendered, a cost often covered by the user's insurance. Some additional funds are provided by county Hotel/Motel tax revenues, by the State, and by various fund-raising events.

Ambulances are stationed at three locations in the County: at Parsons, Thomas, and Canaan Valley. At each of the three locations, an Advanced Life Support rated ambulance is maintained. Additionally, at Davis and at Thomas, a second ambulance is rated as a basic life support unit and is used for less demanding transport situations.

These locations make possible response times of 10 minutes or fewer for most of the populated areas of the County. However, response time can be over 40 minutes, especially in the St. George Magisterial District in the County's northwestern portion and along the Dry Fork in the southern part of the County.

Many emergency patients are transported to the Davis Memorial Hospital in Elkins. For severe trauma cases, emergency medical helicopter service is available from West Virginia University Hospital in Morgantown, which is a 12 to 15 minute flight from Tucker County. Helicopter service is also available from Cumberland and Pittsburgh areas. Other patients from the Davis, Thomas, and Canaan Valley areas are transported to Garrett Memorial Hospital in Oakland, Maryland.

2. Medical Services

Tucker County has no hospital facilities. The nearest full-service hospital facilities to Tucker County are either the Davis Memorial Hospital in Elkins or

the Garrett Memorial Hospital in Oakland, Maryland. The Davis Memorial Hospital owns and operates the DirectCare of Parsons, a walk-in clinic in Parsons.

Meanwhile, primary medical care is available in Tucker County from multiple sources. There are private medical practices, in Thomas, Parsons and St. George.

Those eligible for assistance from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) can visit the Louis A. Johnson VA Medical Center. The center provides health care lab testing, immunizations and preventive health services for veterans in the Tucker County area.

Health Systems Services

Many health care services are provided by the Davis Health System in Parsons. The Davis Health System treats illnesses and other non-emergency injuries and conditions and offers draws for laboratory services. The Davis Health System has a full-time family practitioner based in the same building as DirectCare.

Community Care Pharmacy also available with registered pharmacists offering prescription and over-the-counter medications as well as personal care items. Pharmacy services are coordinated with nearby St. George Medical Clinic, a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC).

In addition to the DirectCare, physician and pharmacy services, Davis Health System provides in-home services to Tucker County residents through its HomePlus subsidiary. The agency provides home medical equipment, home respiratory care and home health care to patients throughout the region.

Davis Health System also cooperates with numerous other medical service providers, including St. George Medical Clinic and the Mountain Top Clinic, both FQHCs, as well as long-term care facility Cortland Acres and other physicians. In addition to its numerous services available right in Tucker County, Davis Health System offers acute care and specialized health care services at its hospital in Elkins.

Another source is the Mountaintop Health Center near Thomas, WV. The Mountaintop Health Center is part of the Preston Taylor Community Health Centers group located near Cortland Acres. The Mountaintop Health Center provides medical care for acute or chronic illnesses, preventive care, routine physicals, laboratory testing, and nursing home visits. It maintains one physician and one physician's assistant on staff and is open weekdays,

Cortland Acres is a 94-bed nursing and rehabilitation care facility near Thomas. The facility provides nursing, short- and long-term physical rehabilitation, post-hospital and post-surgical care, outpatient therapy services, memory impairment

and dementia services, speech therapy services, therapeutic and specialized dietary services, and hospice services.

The St. George Medical Clinic is dedicated to the delivery of family-centered health care in the location that it serves. The clinic provides child examinations, immunizations, adult care, chronic disease management, cancer screening, suturing, stitches, allergy shots, and home visits. It also provides transportation to appointments, case management, dental assistance to those who qualify, a social worker, and a 24-hour emergency on-call system. The clinic partners with the Tucker County Community Care Pharmacy to provide needed medications.

3. 911 Service

Tucker County's 911 service is a modern Enhanced 911 Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP). The Tucker County service receives all 911 calls for the county and handles dispatching duties for the county sheriff, The Parsons Police Department, the West Virginia State Police, county emergency medical services, West Virginia Department of Natural Resources, four fire departments, county animal control and all other related services.

Emergency 911 calls in the county are answered by specially trained Telecommunicators. The Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) software displays the location of the caller immediately upon call arrival of the call. Calls made to non-911 telephone numbers, even though they may be listed as an emergency telephone number, does not allow the PSAP system to function correctly.

4. Office of Emergency Management

The Tucker County Office of Emergency Management (OEM) is located in Parsons. It is funded by and operates under the Tucker County Commission and the West Virginia Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management. The Tucker County Office of Emergency Management (OEM) has a full-time Director, a part-time Deputy Director and a part-time Administrative Assistant.

The purpose of the office is to mitigate, prepare, respond and recover from natural or man-made disasters that occur in Tucker County. It works closely with other emergency service agencies before, during, and after disasters to ensure the safety and needs of the responders and the citizens of Tucker County have been met.

The Office of Emergency Management plans for the possibility of sheltering and evacuation with the Tucker County Local Emergency Planning Committee. The OEM has two response trailers, one supplied with sheltering equipment for its citizens and the other for pets. If an event occurs that is beyond the local

capabilities of the county, then the OEM will obtain assistance from neighboring counties in the region before requesting assistance from the state.

5. Social Services

Senior Citizens Services

Senior citizens' services are provided in Tucker County in several different ways, but primarily by independent organizations. The Tucker County Commission holds the title to a new senior center completed in 1988 and located Parsons. This building is leased for \$10 a year to Tucker County Senior Citizens, Inc., a nonprofit organization that operates the center and also administers a number of federal aid programs for senior citizens throughout the County.

The county offers daily meals at the Senior Center in Parsons and the Mountain Top Senior Center in Thomas. The centers also provide limited weekend meals and home delivered meals.

Home care services are provided to senior citizens through Aged and Disabled Waiver Program, the Medicaid Community Care Program, the VA In-Home Care Program and other programs.

Daily van transportation is available to transport seniors to nutrition sites and non-emergency medical transportation is available under the Medicaid Program.

The WV Bureau of Senior Services also runs a medical equipment loan closet, subsidizes Ensure for those who want it, serves as community outreach facilities, provides facilities that can be used in times of disaster, and runs a food bank.

Family Resource Network

Tucker County supports a family resource network. The Tucker County Family Resource Network is a non-profit organization that provides family support services within the county. The Family Resource Network includes the following:

- A substance abuse prevention coalition.
- A child abuse and prevention program.
- A family support program to enhance parenting skills.
- An electronic tracking system for individuals who have cognitive disorders.
- And, such special events and activities as deemed necessary.

West Virginia University Extension Service

The WVU Extension Office serves the citizens of Tucker County by bringing relevant, up-to-date information and research from West Virginia University to the citizens of the county through educational seminars and workshops, newspaper articles, and newsletters mailings.

PLANNING CONTEXT

Public Services are important in County Planning. Although county is sparsely populated and is difficult to bring services to where large densities of people are centered services are available within the county for those who choose to find them.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, & STRATEGIES

Goals Statement

Allow Tucker County access to police protection, education opportunities, emergency services, health care services and other public services needs.

Objectives

- Facilitate the county public services and ensure that necessary services are provided into the future.
- Work jointly with state, federal, and private entities to promote and develop police, emergency medical, education, and health services throughout the county.

Strategies

- Encourage continued and improved communication and coordination among the entities, agencies, and organizations involved in providing necessary public services. (6-12 months)
- Ensure vital services are actively pursued in development and funding to guarantee these services remain available to county residents. (12-36 months)
- Commingle services for cost benefit in funding opportunities and feasibility. (12-36 months)

Partners and Potential Partners

- The Tucker County Commission provides funding and approves any authorities that operate within the county.
- Tucker County Senior Citizens, Inc., a nonprofit organization that operates the center and also administers a number of federal aid programs for senior citizens throughout the County.
- Tucker County Emergency Ambulance Authority functions as a volunteer organization to provide Ambulance Services within the county.
- Tucker County's 911 service is a call forwarding arrangement that funnels all emergency calls to the central dispatching facility operated by the County's Office of Emergency Services.
- The Tucker County Board of Education maintains educational facilities within the county.
- The County Sheriff and his deputies provide police protection for the residents of the county.
- The State Police provide further police protection for county residents.
- The Office of Emergency Services provides emergency response capability and emergency planning.

Fiscal Considerations

- Use funding streams appropriated by the County Commission.
- Seek additional county general revenues.
- Charge appropriate service and related fees for new and existing activities.
- Seek financial contributions/assistance from external entities with whom work is jointly done.
- Explore impact/development fees to augment existing revenue streams.

RURAL LAND NOT INTENDED FOR URBAN GROWTH

OVERVIEW

The county does not intend to set aside additional rural land. As described above, much of the county is currently set aside as a State Park, a national Wildlife Refuge, or a National Forest.

VISION

The county does not intend to set aside additional land as designated land not intended for urban growth.

RECREATION AND TOURISM

OVERVIEW

The interaction between Economic Development and Recreation and Tourism in Tucker county is significant. Some of the major recreational features within the county include three ski resorts, the Heart of the Highlands trail system, the available bike paths, the many rivers suitable for paddling, the Canaan Valley Wildlife Reserve, and the Monongahela National Forest.

When faced with the decline in manufacturing and mining jobs, local leaders in many West Virginia counties have turned toward the service industry to sustain economic activity in their communities. For example, recreation and tourism facilities in Tucker County's Canaan Valley have expanded greatly. This Valley has been rated one of the nation's top three vacation values and is also considered West Virginia's best-kept secret. According to the Tucker County Convention and Visitors Bureau, visitors to Canaan Valley and to Blackwater State Park constituted approximately 90 percent of total visitors to the area. These numbers translate into high revenue for industries related to recreation and tourism.

Tourism, second-home development, and recreation-related commercial activity in Canaan Valley have grown in the past decades. According to the *Economic Impact of Travel on West Virginia: 2000-2010 Detailed State and County Estimates* by Dean Runyan Associates, September 2011, the economic impact to tourist travel to Tucker County has been significant. The survey estimates show Tucker County travel and tourism accounts for of \$40.1M in direct spending; \$13.0M in earnings; 670 jobs; \$693K in local government revenue and \$2,622K in state government revenue.

In order to capitalize on these earnings, some major investments are being made in Canaan Valley. In 2013, the Canaan Valley State Park will be the subject of a major renovation. Short range plans include a \$34 million dollar renovation. The renovation will include 160 new guest rooms, a new tubing park, a new beginners ski area with surface lift, a wobble clay shooting range, ski lift renovations and major snow making system renovations. Long – range plans for the resort include a new base lodge, additional cabins and campsites, and possibly a new golf course. Meanwhile, the Timberline Resort has announced recently plans to double its ski lift capacity, which will further increase the attractiveness of the local area as a major ski resort.

A U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service forwarded a proposal to upgrade the National Wildlife Refuge in Canaan Valley. Indirect benefits from this proposal will result

in increased property values as well as a regional and national appeal. The proposal focuses on increasing the quality of public preserved lands contained within the county in order to help produce a nature-based tourism product relatively unequalled on the east coast. The proposal focuses on low impact activities such as hiking, back-packing, mountain biking, whitewater boating, wildlife watching/photography, fishing and hunting. These activities are beginning to significantly impact visitors' travel trends to Tucker County. Research has shown that nature-based travelers will tend to visit a destination longer and spend more money while on vacation.

Ski Resorts and State Parks

Tucker County's three ski resorts and two state parks are collocated within Canaan Valley area. The ski resorts are Timberline, Canaan Valley, and White Grass and the state parks are Canaan Valley and Blackwater Falls. These resorts provide a significant draw for tourism during both the summer and the winter months.

The Canaan Valley Resort serves as both a Ski Resort and as a state park. The resort is currently rebuilding 165 new guest rooms. In addition, the park maintains 23 cabins, 34 campground sites, and a restaurant. Recreation facilities include a golf course, a swimming pool, a gymnasium, mountain bike trails, and a skate park. The ski resort has 850 feet of vertical drop with 39 slopes, and three ski lifts. The ski area has snowmaking capabilities and supports night skiing, a snow tubing facility, and air boarding equipment. In addition to the downhill ski facility, the Canaan Valley Resort supports cross-country skiing and snowshoeing with marked trails and a rental facility.

The Timberline Ski Resort is located just down from the Canaan Valley Ski Resort on the same mountain. The Timberline Ski Resort features 37 slopes and three ski lifts with 1000 feet of vertical drop. The Timberline Ski resort also has snowmaking and night skiing. Timberline is also has restaurant facilities and supports mountain biking in the summer.

Nestled between the Canaan Valley and the Timberline downhill ski resorts is the White Grass Cross Country Ski Resort. The White Grass resort includes over 30 kilometers of groomed cross-country skiing trails that transit over 1200 feet of vertical drop. White Grass features a gourmet restaurant, and a rental shop. Although White Grass has no snow making facilities, they do have a snow farm that is capable of making the most out of the naturally accumulated snowfall.

Blackwater Falls State Park is another resort facility in the Canaan Valley area. Blackwater Falls State Park has a lodge, a restaurant, swimming pool, cabins, and a campsite. Blackwater Falls State has a variety of trails that support cross-country skiing in the winter and mountain biking in the summer months.



Heart of the Highlands Trail System

The Heart of the Highlands Trail System is a new concept in trail systems that will connect the non-motorized, multi-use trail systems of five land management agencies in Tucker County into a comprehensive, landscape oriented, environmentally sustainable, multi-use trail system that is accessible to the public. This trail system will combine recreational trails with alternative transportation routes within Tucker County and will further enhance the area's recreation and economic possibilities. Ultimately, the Heart of the Highlands will provide access to and from significant regional and national recreational trail systems.

The first phase of the trail system is a 23 mile loop that will connect the five partner properties. Connecting trails will be established and existing trails improved to link the public lands in and around Canaan Valley to each other and to the Town of Davis. About half of this trail already exists. In 2010 funding was secured through the WV Division of Transportation Recreational Trails Program and Transportation Enhancement Program to build the connections from Davis through the Canaan Valley Institute and on to Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge to Cortland Road. The long-term goal of the trail system is to connect the Heart of the Highlands Trail System to the surrounding regional and national trail systems.

National Center for Youth Science Education

The National Youth Science Foundation (NYSF) owns 111 acres adjacent to Canaan Valley and has embarked on a plan to construct a National Center for Youth Science Education in the mountains of West Virginia. The Center will allow the NYSF to improve and expand its programs and become a focal point for an informal science education that encourages and inspires youth to pursue scientific careers.

The plan for the center features a pedestrian oriented, sustainable learning community consisting of educational, housing, dining, recreational and support facilities. The Center's remote mountain setting assists in creating a place that is part scientific community and part scientific field station. The center plans to engage and inspire students in their scientific explorations and professional journeys.

Bicycle riding

According to the Chris Bologiano's book *The Appalachian Forest*, the sport of mountain biking has become one of the most popular and one of the fastest growing outdoor activities throughout the Appalachian forest regions of the eastern U.S. The sport of mountain biking may soon overtake skiing as the major outdoor recreational activity in the region.

Tucker County has a wide variety of divergent mountain bike trails to suit any desire or any skill level. The county has trails that range from beautiful and easy railroad grades to highly technical single-track trails.

Mountain bike trails as available at the Timberline Ski Resort, the Canaan Valley resort lodge, the Blackwater Falls State Park, the Monongahela National Forest, and at the West Virginia DNR property recently purchased from the Canaan Valley Institute. Of special note will be the interconnected trail system being constructed as part of the Heart of the Highlands trail system. Evening trail rides along many of these trails are a sponsored event throughout the summer.

River running and Canoe Sports

According Charlie Walbridge in his the guide to *Canoeing & Kayaking in West Virginia* the number of paddlers in West Virginia's rivers has increased dramatically. West Virginia now serves as a mainstay for canoe and kayak enthusiast from around the world. Although the majority of West Virginia's commercial river traffic travels down the New and Gauley Rivers, Tucker County lays claim to both placid and as well as exciting and technical rivers for paddling.

Tucker County contains a wide variety of rivers and creeks that are for paddling and rafting trips. The paddling opportunities within the county include the Blackwater, DryFork, and Cheat Rivers. Paddling and rafting conditions vary from quiet flat-water trips to world-renowned highly technical Class V stretches of river.

Motorcycle Riding

Motorcycle riding is a past time that came to West Virginia without encouragement. On their own, motorcyclists discovered that the twisting mountain roads with sweeping curves roads and beautiful scenery of the Potomac Highlands of West Virginia makes the region a favorite ride for motorcyclists.

Motorcycle outings like the Hog Wild gathering frequently take place in Tucker County. These outings serve to benefit both the motorcycle clubs and the local businesses

Public Land Available for Recreation

Because of the vast quantity of public land available within the county, considerable areas are available for recreation. In fact, much of the available lands are designated as recreation areas. Some of the public landholders that make recreational land available are the Monongahela National Forest, the Canaan Valley State Parks, and the Canaan Valley Fish and Wildlife refuge.

Monongahela National Forest

The Monongahela National Forest is a national forest located that protects over 919,000 acres of federally-owned land within a 1,700,000 acres proclamation boundary that includes much of the Potomac Highlands Region and portions of 10 counties.

The Forest is noted for its rugged landscape with spectacular views, blueberry thickets, highland bogs and “sods”, and open areas with exposed rocks. In addition to the second-growth forest trees, the wide range of botanical species found includes rhododendron, laurel on the moist west side of the Allegheny Front.

The forest provides for camping, fishing, hunting, hiking, bicycle riding and other outdoor activities.

Canaan West Virginia State Parks

The West Virginia State Park system supports two parks in Tucker County. The two parks consist of the Canaan Valley State Park and Blackwater Falls State Park.

Both parks provide for camping, bike trails, nature hikes and other diverse outdoor activities.

The Canaan Valley Fish and Wildlife Refuge

The Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge occupies the unique Canaan Valley wetlands. Although the refuge does not support camping, they do offer wildlife dependent recreation including hunting, fishing, photography, bicycle riding, environmental education, and interpretive programs.

Arts Communities

Tucker County is home to an arts community that has grown substantially over the past decade. Although the arts may initially be seen to be a luxury, they have been proven to be a valuable way to rejuvenate districts and boost communities that once relied on other income sources. Studies have shown that in a labor market that prizes well-educated workers, the best way to lure them is often by attracting creative people first.

In Tucker County, growth in the arts communities is evident by the numbers of resident artists, craftspeople, and musicians who pursue their art as livelihood. These craftspeople feed the galleries and performance venues that contribute to the County's economic viability. It is notable also that, for the most part, this growth has been self-motivated and independently developed, and that artists of all types are both long-time residents and people who have chosen more recently to settle here. These artists live throughout the County and their work can be seen and heard locally in multiple performance venues, six different galleries, and various other retail outlets.

The local arts community have emerged as a magnet for financial support for both the general public good and specifically for arts education in the County's public schools. Local businesses have provided sustaining support for this effort. The evidence of combined individual and corporate sponsorship for the arts can be seen in the long history of the Alpine Festival and more recently the STArt Project (the educational outreach program of the WV Highlands Artisans Group). Both MountainMade and the Alpine Festival have successful records of attracting grant monies from outside the County for the creation of long-term County arts assets.

The strong presence of the arts in Tucker County, in addition to benefitting the local population, increasingly takes its place alongside sports, recreation, and nature as a motivation for tourism in Tucker County.

PLANNING CONTEXT

Recreation activities and park facilities are essential in the physical and mental health of a community. Leisure time is needed to rest and relax the human body from the everyday rigors of life. Therefore, providing these services is required for a prosperous and thriving county.

In addition to recreation, tourism remains a major source of revenue for the county.

Planning is necessary in the endeavor for the proper location of the county recreation and tourism facilities to best suit the needs of county residents.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, & STRATEGIES

Goals Statement

Provide leisure opportunities to the residents of Tucker County in an unobtrusive and cost effective manner.

Develop facilities to encourage tourist traffic and their associated revenues.

Objectives

- Acquire land and construct parks and facilities in currently unserved or underserved areas.
- Expand the activities and programs currently offered.
- Facilitate the development of a Tucker County Visitor's Information Center.
- Increase revenues to broaden and help develop Tucker County into a recreation and leisure destination.
-

Strategies

- Survey residents to investigate wanted leisure activities. (6-12 months)
- Encourage continued and improved communication and coordination among the entities, agencies, and organizations involved in recreation and tourism activities. (6-12 months)
- Work with private sector to establish support businesses to embellish the tourist industry in Tucker County. (12-24 months)
- Support efforts to protect and promote existing recreation and tourism-related activities. (12-24 months)
- Undertake advertising campaign to attract tourists to Tucker County, concentrating on the D.C. Metropolitan and Pittsburgh areas. (18-36 months)
- Work in conjunction with the planning of subdivisions through the Planning Commission to ensure recreational opportunities for new planned developments. (24-48 months)

Partners and Potential Partners

- The Tucker County Commission authorizes funding provides support for the various activities that operate within the county.
- The National Forest Service manages the Monongahela National Forest
- The Heart of the Highlands committee manages the development of the Heart of the Highlands Trail System.
- The WV Highlands Artisans Group promotes the development of arts in Tucker County.
- The US Fish and Wildlife Service manages the Federal Lands contained within the Canaan Valley Wildlife Refuge.
- The West Virginia State Park system manages the Canaan Valley and Blackwater Falls State Parks.

- The West Virginia Division of Tourism promotes ski resorts and other tourist activities throughout the state.
- The West Virginia Division of Natural Resources operates the West Virginia State Parks.

Fiscal Considerations

- Use existing revenues streams.
- Explore impact/development fees to augment existing revenue streams.
- Support efforts of external entities to find appropriate financial resources (i.e., recreation facilities construction grants).
- Create traditional and innovative measures for increased money flow for facilities improvements, expansions, and program development (e.g., fund-raisers, auctions, pavilion rentals, and special event fees).
- Pursue bestowments for park and facility property and additional assets.
- Work in conjunction with local, county, state, and national entities to develop revenue flow for the increased development (e.g., grants, gifts, and low interest loans).

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

OVERVIEW

This element of the Comprehensive Plan provides guidance on improving the economic viability of the county. Without a strong, diversified economic base, Tucker County will not be able to implement many of the strategies recommended in the Plan, as well as to create and to retain jobs while enhancing the overall quality of life.

The Tucker County Development Authority provides guidance and leadership for economic development within the county. Operation of the Tucker County Development Authority is governed by *West Virginia Code* (§7-12).

The Tucker County Development Authority adopted a Strategic Plan and it is available on the Tucker County Website. The [Tucker County Development Authority Strategic Plan](#) outlines the authority and the limitations in which the Tucker County Development Authority works to enhance Economic Development within Tucker County.

PLANNING CONTEXT

Tucker County is a special place that offers a high quality of life. Yet, the county also has its share of economic challenges that must be addressed if it is to increase its tax base, create job opportunities for its residents, provide services to all segments of the population, and support its schools, parks, infrastructure and cultural amenities. When the survey was circulated to the residents of Tucker County requesting a list of their primary concerns, Economic Development was the concern that topped the list.

According to the Tucker County Development Authority Strategic plan, much of the county's current economic viability is located outside the county. Half of the labor force must travel outside the county and the state for employment. The requirement for travel exists because the county does not have the benefit of a strong business sector.

The number of jobs and the size of the workforce in the county have both dropped over the last years. The decline in the availability of employment opportunities has been greater than the population decline over the same period. Over the most recent nine-year period for which detailed data is available, the population

decreased 7 percent. However, the civilian labor force has decreased by nearly 15 percent and total employment by almost 20 percent.

Although overall employment figures are low, the county had higher than expected employment levels in the construction and manufacturing sectors, compared to statewide and national employment levels. Also, the 200 workers at the large-scale coalmine operation near Davis in Tucker County (Mettiki Coal) have their employment reported at the corporate headquarters in Maryland rather than at their work location in the county.

Among service producing sectors, only financial activities, leisure, hospitality, and other services have higher than expected employment levels, compared to the statewide and national employment levels. Employment in financial activities is buoyed by the real estate, rental, and leasing subsector. Similarly, employment in leisure and hospitality is enhanced by employment in accommodation and food services. Neither of these is surprising given that Tucker County is a vacation destination with second-home and rental-home markets.

Finally, Tucker County has a relatively high proportion of governmental employment, particularly at the state and local level.

Given this description, it is not surprising that two of the top three employers in Tucker County were tourist related enterprises. Likewise, four of the top 10 employers are governmental entities (though one is technically classified under educational services). Finally, only one goods producing firm made it in the top 10. However, another manufacturing company would have been joined in the list of top 10 employers by a mining company (Mettiki Coal) had its operations near Davis been reported as being in Tucker County rather than at the corporate headquarters.

Top 10 Employers in Tucker County

Rank	Employer
1	Timberline Four Seasons Resort Management Company
2	Tucker County Board of Education *
3	Canaan Valley Resorts
4	Cortland Acres Nursing Home
5	Kingsford Manufacturing Company
6	West Virginia Division of Natural Resources*
7	Tucker County Senior Citizens, Inc.
8	CGP Foods, Inc.
9	West Virginia Division of Juvenile Services*
10	Tucker County Commission*

Source: Workforce WV.

Note: Governmental entities are marked by an asterisk (*).
Canaan Valley is a State Park but its facilities are operated by a private concessionaire.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES & STRATEGIES

Goals Statement

Sustain and enhance the economic vitality of the county, while maintaining the rural character.

Objectives

- Identify, attract, and locate industry and business enterprises that create jobs and advance the overall well-being of Tucker County.
- Retain or expand existing business and industry in Tucker County.
- Advance entrepreneurship throughout Tucker County to lead to business and job growth. Work to indentify and support potential entrepreneurs and serve as a clearinghouse for information and support services, and to identify networking and training for local entrepreneurs.
- Improve the economic well-being of Tucker County through effective collaborative work that leverages resources, builds capacity and achieves common objectives.
- Maintain a close working relationship with state and federal partners in economic development.
- Identify opportunities to collaborate with other organizations in the county that can influence, and advance effective collaboration with other Tucker County organizations that directly link or can influence economic development within their mission.
- Communicate positive points regarding the value of Tucker County as a place to do business. Included in this objective will be the design of a web portal that will provide a positive image of the county.

Strategies

- Actively participate in collaborative marketing efforts with the Tucker County Development Authority, Chamber of Commerce, and the West Virginia Development Office. (6-12 months)

- Actively promote ongoing and established festivals and encourage additional community festivals. (6-12 months)
- Target employers who are interested in locating/expanding to a rural environment within easy commuting distance to a major metropolitan area and are interested in diversifying the employment opportunities needed for long-term economic vitality and stability. Identify businesses that are not detrimental to the natural resources of Tucker County. (12-18 months)
- Develop a comprehensive infrastructure initiative for internet, cable, phone, cell phone, and wireless internet. The infrastructure will serve to support business development within the county. (12-24 months)
- Encourage creation of business base to support other business, such as food service, recreation facilities, outlet shops, rental properties, and other amenities. (12-24 months)
- Support efforts to protect and promote existing tourism-related activities. (12-24 months)
- Develop entrepreneurial opportunities involving the increasing population of seniors/elderly for health care, home care, and extended residential care. (18-36 months)
- Pursue the development of additional senior centers to more efficiently cope with ever increasing needs for the services provided throughout Tucker County by the existing providers. (24-36 months)
- Determine the necessity for and advisability of implementing various forms of land use regulation, subject to approval by county voters, to designate and preserve areas for industrial, commercial, residential, agricultural, recreational, and other uses, with the goal of encouraging the use of land in a manner consistent with its most appropriate use. (24-36 months)

Partners and Potential Partners

- The Tucker County Commission authorizes funding and provides support for the various activities that operate within the county.
- The Tucker County Development Authority provides guidance and leadership for economic development within the county.

- The West Virginia Development of Commerce assists with and encourages economic development within the state.

Fiscal Considerations

- Use funding streams appropriated by the County Commission to attract business to Tucker County.
- Develop funding mechanisms (e.g., tax increment financing) to encourage desirable economic development.
- Utilize grants and low-interest loans
- Support efforts to create a revolving loan fund to enhance development efforts and opportunities.
- Seek other appropriate funding sources for further economic opportunities from state, regional, and national sources.

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

OVERVIEW

This element of the Comprehensive Plan provides guidance on impending Economic Opportunities for the county. In this plan, Economic Opportunities differ from the topics covered within Economic Development section of the plan in that the Economic Development refers to the continuous and ongoing process within the county where Economic Opportunities consist of the one-time opportunities that may become available through shifts in technology, through political opportunities, or through changes in the economic situation.

Foremost in the list of pending Economic Opportunities available to the county exists in the form new technologies that make available the exploitation of the energy reserves found within the Marcellus Shale deposits that underlie the county.

Another one-time economic opportunity available to the Tucker County is the impending arrival Corridor H (officially designated U.S. Route 48).

PLANNING CONTEXT

Marcellus Shale

Marcellus Shale is a unit of marine sedimentary rock found in eastern North America. It is named for a distinctive outcrop near the village of Marcellus, New York and extends throughout much of the Appalachian Basin. The shale contains largely untapped natural gas reserves, and its proximity to the high-demand markets along the East Coast of the United States makes it an attractive target for energy development.

The impervious layers of the Marcellus have trapped valuable natural gas reserves. The rock holds most of the gas in the pore spaces of the shale. However, with the development of modern hydrofracking techniques, developers are able to create fractures or joints within the rock that provides pathways for the gas to flow.

The U.S. Department of Energy has calculated that more than 19.3 trillion cubic feet of natural of recoverable natural gas may be contained in the Marcellus black shale beds that extend from New York state through West Virginia. This recoverable quantity of natural gas is enough to provide total value of two hundred billion dollars at current wellhead prices. The U.S Department of Energy

estimates that this is a sufficient quantity to supply the U.S. demand for the next 90 years.

With such tremendous potential energy reserves available, Tucker County residents who have mineral rights may have the opportunity to participate in some considerable wealth. However, the hydrofracking procedures come with possible environmental side effects such as air pollutants and wastewater and toxins from the process. These side effects have galvanized drilling opponents to demand stringent regulations on drilling procedures, locations, wastewater treatment and work site traffic. Citing the damage wrought by 20th-century coal mines and steel mills, opponents to hydrofracking argue that communities must be more vigilant in protecting their shared resources.

Current Marcellus Shale production in Tucker County will depend both on market conditions and on the availability of gathering lines to transport the raw product to a cracking plant. Preliminary estimates indicate that it will be five to seven years before significant drilling takes place in Tucker County.

In an effort to seek a balanced approach to the Marcellus Shale exploration, the West Virginia University Extension Service has made resources available to assist landowners to gaining knowledge on how to best use of this coming economic opportunity while at the same time preserving the environment.

U.S. Route 48, Corridor H

Corridor H (officially designated as U.S. Route 48) is part of the Appalachian Development Highway System. US 48 is an east–west highway that runs 148 miles from northern Virginia to central West Virginia.

Corridor H was approved as part of the Appalachian Regional Development Act of 1965. The legislation passed as part of an effort to stimulate economic growth in Appalachian rural areas. The highway system was designed to work in conjunction with the Interstate System and other Federal highways in the Appalachian region to will open up an area or areas where commerce and communication have been inhibited by lack of adequate access. Overall, 23 transportation corridors were part of the Appalachian Regional Development Act, including six in West Virginia.

Tucker County stands to benefit from Corridor H by having for the first time in the history of the county a four-lane access road. When completed, the road will service all the municipalities within the county and will provide transportation routes to the East and to the West.

The Corridor incorporates and/or replaces the current U.S. Route 219 and WV Route 93 in Tucker County. (To the west of the county, it also uses U.S. Route 33. To the east of the county, it includes WV Route 42 and WV Route 55 as well

as new routing.) The County Commission provides a representative on the design team as engineering continues for the new highway.

Goals Statement

Sustain and enhance the economic vitality of the county, while maintaining the rural character.

Objectives

- Provide resources to assist the holders of mineral rights within Tucker County to assess their fair share of the mineral wealth in a way that advances the overall well-being of Tucker County.
- Develop infrastructure to make the best use of the new transportation routes that being provided.

Strategies

- Develop a comprehensive program to assist residents in proper decision making with regard to mineral wealth. (12-24 months)
- Determine the necessity for and advisability of implementing various forms of land use regulation, subject to approval by county voters, to designate and preserve areas for industrial, commercial, residential, agricultural, recreational, and other uses, with the goal of encouraging the use of land in a manner consistent with its most appropriate use. (24-36 months)

Partners and Potential Partners

- The Tucker County Commission authorizes funding provides support for the various activities that operate within the county.
- West Virginia University Extension Service provides information on Marcellus Shale extraction and serves as a liaison with respect to issues concerning Marcellus Shale.
- The West Virginia Department of Transportation provides the design, planning, funding, and seeks matching Federal Funds for transportation routes within the county.

Fiscal Considerations

- Use funding streams appropriated by the County Commission.
- Develop funding mechanisms (e.g., tax increment financing) to encourage desirable economic development.
- Utilize grants and low-interest loans
- Support efforts to create a revolving loan fund to enhance development efforts and opportunities.
- Use transportation bonds and other state efforts to install and support the construction of the highway.
- Seek other appropriate funding sources for further economic opportunities from state, regional, and national sources.

COMMUNITY DESIGN

OVERVIEW

This element of the Comprehensive Plan provides guidance, consistent with the land use component, to set goals, plans and programs to promote a sense of community, character and identity.

PLANNING CONTEXT

Tucker County is a special place that offers a high quality of life. Yet, the county also has its share of economic challenges that must be addressed if it is to increase its tax base, create job opportunities for its residents, provide services to all segments of the population, and support its schools, parks, infrastructure and cultural amenities.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES & STRATEGIES

Goals Statement

Enhance the community designs within the county. Increase the vitality of the communities while maintaining the rural character of the county.

Objectives

- Enhance the quality of life in Tucker County through economic mobility.
- Encourage appropriate re-use of vacant and underutilized properties.
- Support programs and efforts to promote economic development in the county and to retain, replace, and increase jobs for county residents.
- Encourage additional, appropriate commercial and industrial development areas along the Corridor H areas of influence located in Tucker County.
- Facilitate pedestrian access to community businesses where appropriate.

- Foster county and business community cooperation in promoting economic development, community attractiveness, and activities and events.

Strategies

- Actively participate in collaborative marketing efforts with the Tucker County Development Authority, Chamber of Commerce, and the West Virginia Development Office. (6-12 months)
- Target employers who are interested in locating/expanding to a rural environment within easy commuting distance to a major metropolitan area and are interested in diversifying the employment opportunities needed for long-term economic vitality and stability. Identify businesses that are not detrimental to the natural resources of Tucker County. (12-18 months)

Partners and Potential Partners

- The Tucker County Commission authorizes funding provides support for the various activities that operate within the county.
- Tucker County Development Authority oversees development in Tucker County.
- West Virginia Development Office supports community design and development throughout West Virginia.
- Local chambers of commerce and business organizations help foster the vitality of the communities and participate in local community designs.

Fiscal Considerations

- Use funding streams appropriated by the County Commission.
- Develop funding mechanisms (e.g., tax increment financing) to encourage desirable economic development.
- Utilize grants and low-interest loans
- Support efforts to create a revolving loan fund to enhance development efforts and opportunities.

- Seek other appropriate funding sources for further economic opportunities from state, regional, and national sources.

PREFERRED DEVELOPMENT, AND REDEVELOPMENT

OVERVIEW

This element of the Comprehensive Plan shall be consistent with the land use component of the plan. It shall identify areas where incentives may be used to encourage development, infill development or redevelopment in order to promote well designed and coordinated communities.

PLANNING CONTEXT

Tucker County is a special place that offers a high quality of life. Yet, the county also has its share of economic challenges that must be addressed if it is to increase its tax base, create job opportunities for its residents, provide services to all segments of the population, and support its schools, parks, infrastructure and cultural amenities.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES & STRATEGIES

Goals Statement

Seek the highest and best use for developable land within the county. Encourage such development while maintaining the basic rural character within the county.

Objectives

- Enhance the quality of life in Tucker County through economic mobility.
- Encourage appropriate re-use of vacant and underutilized properties.
- Encourage development in designated areas.

- Encourage additional, appropriate commercial and industrial development areas along the newly developing Corridor H (Route 48), along Route 32, and other areas where infrastructure supports development within Tucker County.

Strategies

- Actively participate in collaborative marketing efforts with the Tucker County Development Authority, Chamber of Commerce, and the West Virginia Development Office. (6-12 months)
- Target employers who are interested in locating/expanding to a rural environment within easy commuting distance to a major metropolitan area and are interested in diversifying the employment opportunities needed for long-term economic vitality and stability. Promote their location into the preferred locations. (12-18 months)

Partners and Potential Partners

- The Tucker County Commission authorizes funding provides support for the various activities that operate within the county.
- Tucker County Development Authority oversees development in Tucker County.
- West Virginia Development Office supports community design and development throughout West Virginia.

Fiscal Considerations

- Use funding streams appropriated by the County Commission.
- Develop funding mechanisms (e.g., tax increment financing) to encourage desirable economic development.
- Utilize grants and low-interest loans

Support efforts to create a revolving loan fund to enhance development efforts and opportunities.

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- Seek other appropriate funding sources for further economic opportunities from state, regional, and national sources.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION AND RESOURCE CONSERVATION

OVERVIEW

The Tucker County Historic Landmark Committee oversees Historic Preservation and Resource Conservation within the county. The committee plays a role in the review process for potential historic sites that are listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. It operates as part of the Certified Local Government program which gives national recognition to local preservation commissions and empowers communities in their preservation efforts.

- As of 2011, Tucker County has eight properties listed on the National Register. Fairfax Stone, junction of Grant, Preston, and Tucker Counties (1972)
- Cottrill Opera House, Thomas (1979)
- Tucker County Courthouse and Sheriff's Residence/Jail, Parsons (1984)
- The Western Maryland Depot, Parsons (1996)
- Thomas Commercial Historic District, Thomas (1998)
- Saint George Academy, Saint George (2001)
- The Meyer House, Davis (2010)
- Tucker County Bank Building, Parsons (2010)

Additionally, the Thomas Commercial Historic District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1998. The district includes 61 resources, 48 which are considered contributing buildings. In addition to these resources, Cottrill Opera House is centrally located in the district and was listed individually in 1979. The district is made up of two parallel streets -- Front Street (or East Avenue) and Spruce Street. A public access alleyway provides views of the backs of the properties and bisects the district. Sidewalk improvements and ample parking make the district walkable and easy to access by car. These resources are set in an exceptionally scenic area with abundant outdoor activities and other tourism activities.

The Tucker County Historic Landmark Commission proposes to expand on these assets by utilizing Thomas' historic properties to educate the public about their historical and cultural significance and to promote and encourage heritage tourism activities available in the area through walking tours, interpretive signage and website development.

In addition to the above-mentioned listings, there are many other properties that have been determined eligible for the National Register or are considered significant on a local level.

PLANNING CONTEXT

The Tucker County Historic Landmark Committee will continue to review eligible properties for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places. This review is important because the landmarks contribute to the character of the county and provide a sense of history.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES & STRATEGIES

Goals Statement

Sustain and enhance historic landmarks while maintaining the rural character.

Objectives

- Enhance the quality of life in Tucker County.
- Encourage appreciation of county, state and national history by acknowledgement of historic landmarks.

Strategies

- Actively participate in historic appreciation efforts with the Tucker County.

Partners and Potential Partners

- The Tucker County Commission authorizes funding provides support for the various activities that operate within the county.
- The Tucker County Historic Landmark Committee oversees Historic Preservation and Resource Conservation within the county.
- The State Historic Preservation Office seeks to identify, recognize, preserve and protect West Virginia's prehistoric and historic structures, objects and sites.

Fiscal Considerations

- Develop funding mechanisms (e.g., tax increment financing) to encourage historic appreciation.
- Seek other appropriate funding sources for further economic opportunities from state, regional, and national sources.
- Use funding streams appropriated by the County Commission..

APPENDICES

1. CANAAN VALLEY ZONING ORDINANCE
2. COPY OF THE SURVEY SENT TO THE RESIDENTS OF TUCKER COUNTY
3. TABULATED RESULTS OF THE TUCKER COUNTY SURVEY
4. STAKEHOLDER MEETING NOTES