

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES TASK FORCE FINAL REPORT

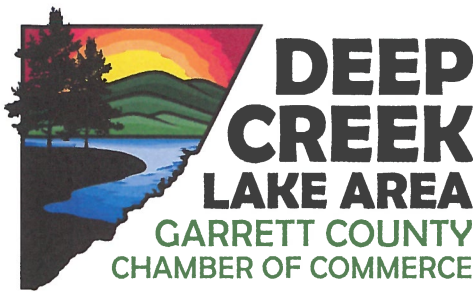
In August 2017, the Garrett County Chamber launched the Strategic Initiatives Task Force to help generate ideas to foster growth of the county. The defined purpose of the Strategic Initiatives Task Force (SITF) is to identify opportunities and eliminate barriers to the future growth of the community. The goals are to:

- Identify public/private partnership models that may be established locally to cultivate development.
- Through a hub and spoke model, connect and amplify regional development organizations (i.e. GOBA, GGBA, Friendsville Way, Frostburg Forward, Development Corp.) to share ideas and leverage resources.
- Conduct a S.W.O.T. (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats) Analysis.
- Coordinate inter-city visits to similar communities to learn from their successes.

From September thru November 2017, local organizations were asked to complete a S.W.O.T. Analysis of Garrett County's Position for Economic Growth with their Boards of Directors or members. Based on all of the responses from 16 local organizations representing over 200 individuals, the SWOT Analysis was been compiled and filtered into 10 categories: Education/schools, Recreation, Health and Safety, Housing, Infrastructure, Tourism, Culture and Heritage, Business and Industry, Government, and Demographics and Lifestyle. Under each category, the top strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats were identified.

The SITF then refined list and identified initiatives and programs under each category to improve on the strengths, mitigate weaknesses and expound on opportunities by working with local organizations, agencies and partners in the community. They then voted on that list and determined the top initiatives that will be recommended to the Board of County Commissioners, the Chamber Board of Directors and the organizations that completed the S.W.O.T. Analysis





The Strategic Initiatives Task Force Recommends These Initiatives to Foster Growth in Garrett County:

- Create a county-wide long-term vision plan for growth (i.e. GC 2030) that includes measurable goals and benchmarks, and looks more than 10 years into the future. The plan must include the creation of a public/private partnership that will implement the plan. The County Commissioners should appoint a leader to develop the plan.
 - Intensify and support advocacy efforts for state & federal funding of broadband development in the County. The community should engage regularly with law makers and state officials in Maryland. County should provide continual updates on broadband development including an annual report. The Chamber should lead regular trips to D.C. to advocate for funding of broadband development.
 - Expand TIF financing to fund future projects.
 - Chamber should form an exploratory committee to consider a referendum by the 2020 Presidential Election on home rule and expanding the Board of County Commissioners to five individuals by adding two at large Commissioners with staggered terms.
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- Conduct a county-wide study on housing in Garrett County to consider affordability, availability of subsidized, market rate availability, inventory of long-term rentals & single-family homes, existing need, future needs, recommendations for funding and incentivizing housing development – market rate and subsidized – and recommendations for attracting developers. Study should include the number of people that work in the County but commute from outside.

