



CHANGING
Maryland
for the Better

State of Maryland

2020-2024

Appalachian Development Plan

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Introduction

In accordance with Section 5.3 of the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) Code, this document will serve as the State of Maryland’s Appalachian Development Plan. The purpose of this Plan is to set forth a strategic agenda for Appalachian Maryland, based on the issues and the needs identified within the region, and to define how development projects will be prioritized based on available resources. The implementation of this plan will meet the diverse and dynamic needs of Appalachian Maryland by targeting resources and strategies supported by Governor Larry Hogan in accordance with our state goals, and ARC’s defined goals and objectives.

Background

Appalachia, as defined in the legislation from which the Appalachian Regional Commission derives its authority, is a 205,000 square mile region that follows the Appalachian Mountains from southern New York to northern Mississippi. The Appalachian Region includes all of West Virginia and parts of 12 other states: Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, Mississippi, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia. Appalachia is home to more than 25 million people.

The Appalachian Regional Commission was established by Congress in 1965 to support economic and social development in the region. The commission is a unique partnership comprised of the governors of the 13 Appalachian states and a federal co-chair appointed by the President of the United States. Grassroots participation is provided through local development districts—multicounty organizations with boards made up of elected officials, business leaders, and other local leaders.

In response to the action of Congress, Maryland Governor Spiro Agnew issued an executive order in 1971 creating the Tri-County Council for Western Maryland, Inc. (Tri-County Council). The council is a local development district (LDD) serving the three-county region in Appalachian Maryland. It is owned by its member governments of Allegany, Garrett and Washington counties, and provides economic and community development assistance to its partners.

In an era of reduced federal funds for valuable job-creating infrastructure, the ARC program continues to leverage local, state, and federal funds to implement such projects across the three counties and 24 municipalities of Appalachian Maryland.

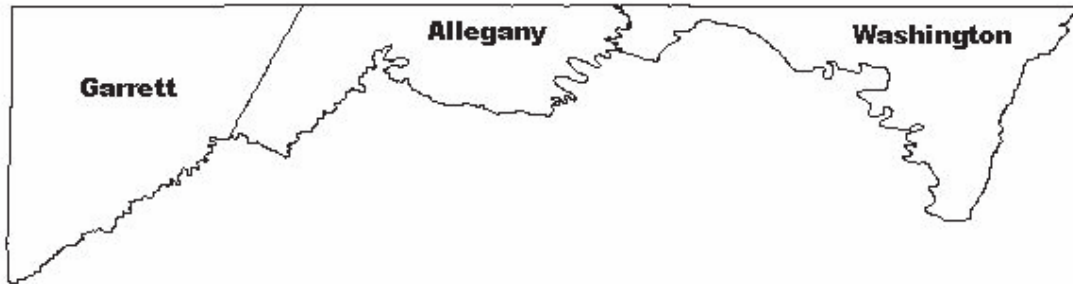
Governor Larry Hogan is the State of Maryland’s representative to the ARC. Governor Hogan has appointed Wendi Peters as his alternate to the commission. Bill Atkinson serves as the Maryland Program Manager. These appointees work with the Tri-County Council, local governments, economic development organizations, state agencies, nonprofits and higher education to address the needs and priorities of the region.

The Maryland Appalachian Development Plan for Fiscal Years 2020-2024 is consistent with ARC’s mission to innovate, partner, and invest to build community capacity and strengthen economic growth throughout the region. The plan focuses on the need to invest in jobs, infrastructure, education, and training while considering the needs to protect natural resources and strengthen communities. Implementation of the plan will involve a network of partnerships from the federal, state and local level involving the resources and work of public, private, and nonprofit entities.

The ARC funds projects through its Area Development Program and Appalachian Development Highway Program. All projects address one or more of the five strategic investment goals identified in ARC's 2016–2020 strategic plan:

Overview of Appalachian Maryland

The Maryland Appalachian region consists of three counties – Garrett, Allegany, and Washington – 24 municipalities and spans 1,529 square miles.



The ARC has designated Garrett, Allegany, and Washington counties as “Transitional” for FY20. Transitional counties are those transitioning between strong and weak economies. Transitional counties rank economically between the lowest 25 percent and the highest 25 percent of the nation's counties.

Population

As of July 2017, the three counties that make up the Appalachian region of Maryland have a total population of 251,426. Historically this region has had one of the slowest rates of growth in the state but had grown in every decade through 2010. Over the last eight years, the population in the region has declined by nearly 1,800 residents.

Approximately 60 percent of the region’s population is concentrated in Washington County compared to roughly 28 percent in Allegany County, and 12 percent in Garrett County. In the period 2000-2007, rural and exurban areas such as the western Maryland region benefited from positive net migration. As home prices grew out of reach for many in urban areas, homebuyers moved further out into the exurbs or “third tier” of suburbs to purchase more affordable homes. This trend particularly impacted Washington County, which had an influx of residents from neighboring counties. However, three years later came the collapse in home prices, bursting the housing bubble resulting in negative effects across the economy. Job losses and reduction in income impacted migration patterns and homeownership. The region has experienced an outmigration of residents since 2010.

Income

Based on data from the American Community Survey’s Five-Year Estimates 2013-2017, the inflation-adjusted Median Household Income (MHI) for the United States was \$57,652. The MHI for the state of Maryland during that same period was \$78,916, while the MHI in the western Maryland region was \$52,300— 66 percent of the state MHI. The MHI in Washington County was \$58,422, just higher than the national MHI, while MHIs for Allegany and Garrett were lower at \$43,265 and \$47,782, respectively.

Unemployment

Maryland's unemployment rate reached a high of 7.7 percent in 2010. At that rate, more people were unemployed in 2010 than during the officially defined "Great Recession," which spanned from December 2007 through June 2009 as identified by the National Bureau of Economic Research. Unfortunately, the unemployment rate in western Maryland at that same time was nearly two points higher at 9.4 percent.

Unemployment rates in the region have since dropped considerably to 4.7 percent in 2018. However, in the spring of 2019 the region experienced the closure of the Verso Corporation paper mill in Allegany County, which employed over 650 employees in the region. The full effect of the closure, including total job losses in the supply chain, is yet to be determined.

Job and Wage Growth

Western Maryland's share of statewide wage and salary employment has remained at 4.2 percent over the last seven years (2010-2017). In 2017, there were 2.8 million wage and salary workers in the State of Maryland with less than 115,000 of those workers in western Maryland. Sixty percent of the western Maryland region's workforce is concentrated in Washington County followed by Allegany (27 percent) and Garrett (11 percent). In the most recent period for which data is available (2016-2017), state wage and salary jobs increased 0.87 percent while jobs declined 0.79 percent across the Maryland Appalachian region. Allegany County had the largest decline at 1.12 percent, and Garrett the smallest decline at 0.30 percent.

Healthcare

Appalachian Maryland has a comprehensive medical care system, however, access to that care is still limited in many areas. The medical care system includes county health departments, hospitals, community health centers, mental health facilities, emergency care networks, a variety of elderly care programs and a National Cancer Research Center.

Western Maryland Health System has entered in to a clinical affiliation agreement with University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, while Garrett Regional Medical Center has an affiliation with West Virginia University Medicine. In addition, area hospitals are focusing on telehealth initiatives, which include "in home" monitoring services and telehealth services to provide consultations with specialists. In further efforts to provide access to affordable care in Appalachian Maryland, we have participated in the ARC J-1 Visa Waiver Program.

In addition to efforts in the region to upgrade facilities and increase access, local colleges are offering new and expanded curriculum to address the shortage of healthcare professionals across the region. Allegany County Board of Education has a premedical concentration program for high school students. Frostburg State University recently began a Physician Assistant graduate program.

Education

The focus at all levels of education is academic excellence and increasing Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) with the objective of growing our own workforce and fostering entrepreneurship.

Realizing that local graduates wishing to go to college cannot always afford the tuition, Garrett County has set aside funds that will give every high school graduate in the county the opportunity to attend the local community college tuition free for two years. This will enhance the workforce for the county and surrounding area and help ensure that those in the county who wish to further their education are able.

Allegany County now offers a similar Opportunity Scholarship, which is only available to residents of Allegany County. Tuition subsidies are provided to help support the cost of tuition that is not covered by federal or state aid, and scholarship support. Up to 50 percent of the in-county tuition rate per credit hour is provided through this scholarship fund.

Appalachian Maryland has a strong and responsive network of colleges. Frostburg State University, the only state university located in Appalachian Maryland, is playing a key role in addressing the education and labor force training needs of the region. Additionally, the University of Maryland System operates a satellite campus in downtown Hagerstown that complements Frostburg's efforts.

In addition to providing a solid college education for traditional students, the three community colleges are also playing a major role in closing skills gaps and addressing the changing workforce needs. They work directly with Frostburg State University as well as the local boards of education to maximize learning opportunities and enhance the region's labor force.



Priorities of Appalachian Maryland

In 2015, ARC approved a strategic plan that set forth a vision for the future of Appalachia:

With a clear vision, ARC uses its resources, tools and investments to advance their mission to innovate, partner, and invest to build community capacity and strengthen economic growth throughout all of Appalachia.

Maryland has built upon the major goals as set forth by ARC and identifies the following priorities for the region.

Economic Development

Governor Hogan is focused on keeping Maryland open for business and creating greater economic opportunity in every part of the state. We understand the unique challenges of economic development and job creation in Appalachian Maryland, and the importance of collaboration, and leveraging funding and investments.

Maryland has proven its commitment to the region by providing funding for a new area of focus at Frostburg State University establishing an Office of Regional Development and Engagement. The new office integrates university resources with regional partners in Appalachian Maryland to help communities and companies be competitive and meet the challenges of economic and community development.

There are 12 federally-designated Opportunity Zones in Appalachian Maryland. The Opportunity Zones incentive program is a community investment tool established by Congress in the Tax Cuts and Job Acts of 2017. The program was established to encourage long term investment in low income urban and rural communities. Maryland has expanded the initiative with additional tax credits, and funding programs to bring jobs and businesses to the designated zones.

In addition, economic development efforts in the region have shifted to attracting information technology and advanced manufacturing plants. We have facilitated a partnership between Allegany County and Frostburg State University to move forward with an implementation study for an Autonomous Technology Center in Appalachian Maryland. Following a promising feasibility study, it is the goal to position Maryland as a national leader in autonomous technologies research and development with the addition of the Autonomous Technology Center (ATC). The western ATC would complement the two existing ATCs and together form the “Maryland ATC triangle”.

We are also working to turn challenges into opportunities with support for asset-based development around the outdoor recreation opportunities in the region. There has been recent growth and development of tourism-related businesses with a positive impact from recreational, historical and heritage attractions, and we will continue to support this important initiative.

Infrastructure

Infrastructure provides the foundation for a healthy economy. Governor Hogan is focused on addressing infrastructure needs across the entire state with an understanding of the particular needs and challenges of rural Appalachian Maryland.

With economic development efforts shifted to attracting information technology and advanced manufacturing plants, new infrastructure is needed. It is recognized that the infrastructure to support such businesses is not adequate in most places and where it is adequate, it is expensive compared with urban areas of the state. As a result, the focus has been on leveraging resources and collaborating with partners to improve infrastructure such as broadband access.

Allegany and Garrett counties completed the expansion of fiber connections to serve business parks. Garrett County utilized “white space” spectrum to deliver high speed internet to areas that previously were only able to be reached by slow and expensive satellite connections. We continue working together to complete some of the remaining “last mile” connections.

The completion of Interstate 68, has brought steady, although moderate, increases in growth. This interstate, also known as “Corridor E” in the Appalachian Development Highway System connected the area with other interstates and made doing business in the area more cost effective.

Understanding the importance of connecting Appalachia to the interstate system and providing access within the region, work has begun on construction of Corridor N from I-68 to Old Salisbury Road. Substantial completion is expected in December 2020.

We are particularly focused on new approaches to remove barriers, leverage partnerships, and expand critical infrastructure to meet the needs of the 21st century for economic growth, job creation, and education throughout the region.

Recovery Ecosystem

Governor Hogan has brought together state and local partners to support prevention, treatment, and enforcement efforts combating the heroin and opioid crisis in Maryland. We have been focused on filling the gaps in the recovery ecosystem, understanding that clinical care, access to employment, housing and transportation to provide the needed foundation to empower those struggling with a substance abuse disorder.

Western Maryland Health System will soon open a 24-hour community-based crisis and service center for those battling opioid addiction. The center will provide patients with access to a safe environment outside of the emergency department to receive crisis assessment, intervention, and a connection to resources.

In addition to crisis and emergency treatment, a concerted effort is underway to provide workforce training for patients with opioid and other substance misuse disorders, which includes working with local employers and addressing housing and transportation needs for those in treatment and looking to reenter the workforce.

A local nonprofit, Brooke’s House, recently opened a sober living facility in Washington County. Brooke’s House provides state-of-the-art treatment and recovery services and resources to help residents move forward to achieve their dreams of living drug-free, productive lives.

Education and Workforce Development

Development of a highly competent and well-educated workforce with the skills desired by existing, new, and relocating businesses is another of the state's priorities. Governor Hogan has provided a blueprint for the development of an effective and efficient workforce system across the state. The blueprint is focused on collaboration among state agencies, effectively leveraging resources, and providing opportunity for all jobseekers, including a new generation of workers through education and apprenticeships.

State and local economic development teams and local education institutions are coordinating efforts to address the needs of existing and new businesses being recruited to the area. Allegany County has opened a maker community space where people will have access to equipment that supports workforce investment, innovation, invention, and creativity along with the availability of structured light manufacturing hands-on training and certification.

The higher education institutions also continue to focus on the importance of education and technology, and have worked with the state and local governments to achieve state-of-the-art technologies for much of their curriculum. The colleges are now working to share this infrastructure with public schools and create greater opportunities for advanced learning, including the formation of magnet schools, active learning labs, and STEM and robotics programming.



State Strategic Goals and Objectives

With our established state priorities – economic development, infrastructure, recovery ecosystem, education and workforce development – we work to integrate our State goals with the ARC goals, and support projects that are consistent with the objectives and strategies as outlined below. We are focused on self-sustaining economic development and job growth while maximizing return on investment and meeting the local needs and priorities across our Appalachian region.

The following is Maryland’s integration of objectives and strategies to further ARC’s goals.

ARC Investment Goal 1: Economic Opportunities – Invest in entrepreneurial and business development strategies that strengthen Appalachia’s economy.

State Objective 1.1: Support business expansions and increase start-ups and entrepreneurship.

State Strategy 1.1.1: Provide training, investment leads, and technical assistance for businesses and entrepreneurs.

State Strategy 1.1.2: Support efforts to improve access to capital for businesses.

State Strategy 1.1.3: Provide the infrastructure to support businesses in the region.

State Objective 1.2: Prepare for the economic development of the next century and attract new businesses.

State Strategy 1.2.1: Identify areas for development of research and testing facilities for new technology.

State Strategy 1.2.2: Facilitate the development of research and testing facilities and workforce training for new technology.

State Strategy 1.2.3: Support and promote agri-tourism, and agricultural and other resource based businesses based on regional needs and demands.

State Strategy 1.2.4: Provide technical assistance and support development of plans and studies.

State Objective 1.3: Support reinvestment in existing communities throughout the region.

State Strategy 1.3.1: Work in partnership with local jurisdictions to support projects that encourage revitalization and reinvestment.

State Strategy 1.3.2: Provide the necessary infrastructure for revitalization and reinvestment.

State Strategy 1.3.3: Increase workforce and affordable housing stock.

State Objective 1.4: Increase international exports from the ARC region.

State Strategy 1.4.1: Provide training and technical assistance for businesses.

State Strategy 1.4.2: Develop programs that will assist in marketing and business development on an international level.

ARC Investment Goal 2: Ready Workforce – Increase the education, knowledge, skills, and health of residents to work and succeed in Appalachia.

State Objective 2.1: Support and promote educational programs that will prepare students for jobs in the 21st century.

State Strategy 2.1.1: Expand and support the P-Tech model and K-12 STEM, and active learning labs in preparing students for 21st century jobs.

State Strategy 2.1.2: Work with local employers to create and expand apprenticeships and other school to work transition programs.

State Strategy 2.1.3: Work to create and support programs directed toward postsecondary access and success.

State Objective 2.2: Expand partnerships among local schools, colleges, and businesses to support workforce development and improve workforce readiness.

State Strategy 2.2.1: Provide continuing education training in advanced skills for workers in the region.

State Strategy 2.2.2: Work with local employers to create and expand apprenticeship programs.

State Strategy 2.2.3: Work with local businesses to develop programs that will encourage workers to take advantage of post-secondary education programs.

State Strategy 2.2.4: Support training for displaced workers and formerly incarcerated individuals.

State Objective 2.3: Provide support for a recovery ecosystem.

State Strategy 2.3.1: Develop workforce training and job placement programs for those recovering from a substance misuse disorder.

State Strategy 2.3.2: Support transportation opportunities for individuals recovering from substance dependence in their reentry to the workforce.

State Strategy 2.3.3: Support temporary housing options for patients in recovery programs and returning to the workforce.

State Objective 2.4: Provide support for a strong, accessible health network.

State Strategy 2.4.1: Support training and education programs for healthcare professionals.

State Strategy 2.4.2: Increase access to healthcare.

State Strategy 2.4.3: Support projects for healthcare prevention and wellness.

State Strategy 2.4.4: Support programs that address substance dependence.

ARC Investment Goal 3: Critical Infrastructure – Invest in critical infrastructure – especially broadband; transportation, including the Appalachian Development Highway System; and water/wastewater systems.

State Objective 3.1: Develop and support basic infrastructure and facilities needed to support community and economic development.

State Strategy 3.1.1: Develop and improve water systems to ensure that residents and businesses have clean water.

State Strategy 3.1.2: Develop and improve wastewater systems for residents and businesses.

State Strategy 3.1.3: Develop and implement a combined stormwater overflow systems to ensure compliance with state and federal regulations.

State Objective 3.2: Continue the development of a modern communications network.

State Strategy 3.2.1: Increase access to broadband.

State Strategy 3.2.2: Develop, support, and maintain infrastructure for broadband and digital communications.

State Objective 3.3: Develop a balanced transportation system, which is supportive of economic growth and investment potential in the region.

State Strategy 3.3.1: Development of a north-south transportation network in the region.

State Strategy 3.3.2: Improve secondary and local access highways roads that will support primary highway development and yield an integrated network of road transit in the region.

State Strategy 3.3.3: Support development of key transportation corridors (highway, rail, aviation) that enhance economic opportunity.

State Strategy 3.3.4: Support multimodal transportation options.

ARC Investment Goal 4: Natural and Cultural Assets – Strengthen Appalachia’s community and economic development potential by leveraging the region’s natural and cultural heritage assets.

State Objective 4.1: Increase employment and sales in the travel and heritage tourism industry, particularly in the areas of outdoor recreation, convention attractions, and historical interest.

State Strategy 4.1.1: Support regional marketing programs for the travel and tourism industry.

State Strategy 4.1.2: Support the development of heritage tourism products linked to state and national byway and heritage area efforts.

State Objective 4.2: Support and enhance the outdoor recreation economy.

State Strategy 4.2.1: Support the expansion of outdoor recreation opportunities.

State Strategy 4.2.2: Assist in development of tourism opportunities related to outdoor recreation.

State Objective 4.3: Enhance and protect historic and cultural resources.

State Strategy 4.3.1: Support programs to identify, enhance and preserve Maryland’s heritage and cultural resources.

State Strategy 4.3.2: Assist in development of tourism opportunities related to historic and cultural resources.



ARC Investment Goal 5: Leadership and Community Capacity – Build the capacity and skills of current and next-generation leaders and organizations to innovate, collaborate, and advance community and economic development.

State Objective 5.1: Strengthen leadership skills and capacity.

State Strategy 5.1.1: Support programs that provide training in leadership development for youth, interested citizens, and community leaders.

State Strategy 5.1.2: Support programs that provide management skills to nonprofit organizations.

State Objective 5.2: Promote collaborative partnerships.

State Strategy 5.2.1: Support groups, meetings and workshops that provide opportunities for cooperation and capacity building.



Maryland ARC Operations

The ARC Program in Maryland is directed through the Office of the Governor and coordinated and managed by the Special Secretary of Smart Growth who serves as the Governor's Alternate to the ARC. The Governor's Alternate works with the Program Manager at the Maryland Department of Planning. The State of Maryland submits projects to the ARC on behalf of Appalachian Maryland's local governments, non-profits, and regional institutions.

The Program Manager works closely with the Tri-County Council for Western Maryland, Inc. (Tri-County Council) Maryland's Local Development District (LDD).

Tri-County Council has operated as the LDD for the Appalachian Regional Commission for over forty years and represents a working partnership of federal, state and local governments. The Council's primary focus is to solve area-wide problems and encourage regional economic development. The Council serves as the regional planning agency for Western Maryland under the guidelines of the Appalachian Regional Commission and the Economic Development Administration. The Council also serves as the regional Clearinghouse for transportation projects available through the Maryland Transit Administration, provides technical assistance for grant applications, and sits on the Maryland Broadband Cooperative Executive Board of Directors.

The Program Manager and the LDD meet regularly with potential applicants to provide information to ensure complete applications, confirm eligibility under ARC code and ensure projects are consistent with ARC and state strategic goals and strategies.

County and local governments, non-profits and educational institutions are invited to submit ARC applications in February of each year.

Counties develop and rank preliminary project descriptions and submit these to the LDD in the third quarter of the federal fiscal year.

The LDD and the Program Manager review and evaluate the projects submitted by each county and develop a priority list for the Appalachian region.

Projects are evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Consistency with state and federal objectives
- Project scope and cost effectiveness
- Project readiness
- Potential for job growth
- Equitable funding among counties

The ARC has designated Garrett, Allegany, and Washington Counties as transitional for FY20. The required match for Area Development Projects in transitional counties is 50 percent. The LDD and the Program Manager review the availability/commitment of matching funds for each project.

The Governor's Alternate and the Program Manager review the priority list and also evaluate the projects based on consistency with state and federal objectives, project scope and cost effectiveness, project readiness, potential for job growth and equitable funding among counties. The review also includes confirmation of matching funds.

Recommendations are presented to the LDD Board in June for final approval.

In late August eligible projects may apply for funding. All projects that are in a position to accept funding should have applications submitted, to the ARC Program Manager, no later than November 15 each year.

Approved ARC projects are monitored by the Program Manager and the LDD to assess progress and to identify and resolve any potential problems.



ARC Project Status as of September 2019

The following is a list of ARC projects that are currently underway. New projects for FY20 have been invited to apply for funds. These potential projects can be found at tccwmd.org.

Allegany County

North Branch Pumping Station – Upgrade existing pump station that serves the North Branch Industrial Park. The park is currently near capacity and houses the counties top employment companies.

Frostburg State University Economic Outreach Office – Startup cost for the development of newly state funded Office of Regional Development and Engagement at the university.

Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) Sensing Center – Establishment of a UAV Remote Sensing Center that will provide workforce training in all aspects of UAV operations at Frostburg State University.

Allegany College of Maryland Hospitality and Culinary Arts Training and Enhancement Project – Provide equipment to improve the workforce training at the college-owned restaurant in the Gateway Center building in downtown Cumberland.

Evergreen Outdoor Education Facility – Purchase equipment to train students on solar technology and composting restroom facilities.

Allegany County Health Department – Purchase of Panoramic Image Machine for improved dental healthcare for all residents.

Allegany County Public Schools Active Learning Labs – Installation of active learning labs in three elementary schools. The labs provide computer and science probeware equipment in each classroom. Students will have the opportunity to learn in a technologically rich environment to learn context, academic and discipline-specific vocabulary, and to think critically.

Allegany College of Maryland Automotive Technology Advanced Workforce Development – Purchase advanced automotive technology testing equipment, engines, supplies, and related resources to support the program and meet the needs of local employers.

Cumberland River Park – Development of an implementation plan for creating a river park on the Potomac River in downtown Cumberland.

Garrett County

GaCo's Vision for Appalachia: All Students STEM Ready – Garrett County Robotics Team will share their Waypoint Initiative across all Appalachian school districts. This program introduces elementary students to STEM through unique and engaging lessons taught by high school students.

Keyser's Ridge Business Park Water Storage – Construction of a 200,000 gallon water storage tank and related infrastructure for industrial park development.

Garrett Hospital – Provide a telemed communication system to engage patient consultations with their affiliation at West Virginia University Medicine.

Garrett Community College STEM Equipment – Purchase of digital dissection table and related software for interactive anatomical models to train healthcare students and professionals.

Casselman Trail Study – Study looking at the feasibility and route for a trail near Grantsville to connect to Meyersdale, Pennsylvania and the Great Allegheny Passage.

Washington County

Hagerstown Community College Energy House – Purchase equipment for workforce training on all aspects of energy sources and technology in the new energy house to meet employer demand.

Hagerstown Community College Electronic Health Records – Provide equipment for new Associate of Applied Science Degree program in health information management, and new certification program in electronic health records. The equipment will provide students with technology-enabled learning tools helping them meet increasing workforce demands.

Brookland Water Storage – Construct water storage and infrastructure for mental health facility. The current system is failing and is inadequate to serve the increase in demand.

The Maryland Theatre – Purchase equipment and furnishings for expansion and transformation of a historic theatre into a performing arts complex.

Allegheny/Garrett County

Western Maryland Fiber Project – Build 4.5 miles of fiber and light over 60 miles of dark fiber. Nearly 500 acres with industrial and business parks will be served by the new fiber. The Maryland Broadband Cooperative is involved in the project.