



Western Maryland
Make it. In the Mountains.

Tourism Business Expansion Analysis

Elevating the Outdoors



SUBMITTED BY:

Downstream Strategies
911 Greenbag Road
Morgantown, WV 26508
www.downstreamstrategies.com



IN PARTNERSHIP WITH:

InnerAction Media
1440 Center Hill Avenue
Morgantown, WV 26505
www.inneractionmedia.com

June 30, 2023

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PROJECT TEAM

Our project team includes Evan Hansen, Dale Shannon, Joey James, Grazia Apolinar, and Kasey Osborne at Downstream Strategies and Dylan Sheldon, Liza Heiskell, Gabe Ofca, and Jim Matuga at InnerAction Media.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors thank the Appalachian Regional Commission for providing funding for this project. We greatly appreciate the time and feedback provided by steering committee members from Allegany County (Jeffrey Barclay, Ashli Workman), Garrett County (Kim Durst, Siera Wigfield), and the State of Maryland Department of Commerce (Marci Ross, Andrew Sargent), as well as consulting by Sarah Duck and Steve Kelley (Garrett County).

1. INTRODUCTION

This Tourism Business Expansion Analysis is the second of three linked reports that comprise a marketing plan to retain and recruit outdoor recreation and lifestyle manufacturing businesses and employees to Western Maryland. The first report, a Manufacturing Business Attraction Analysis, assesses the potential growth of four outdoor recreation and lifestyle manufacturing industry clusters that have great potential in the region: (1) apparel; (2) outdoor vehicles, boats, parts, and accessories; (3) timber/wood; and (4) specialty foods.

This report broadens the analysis beyond manufacturing businesses to include lodging, dining, and retail establishments that cater to Western Maryland's increasing number of visitors. The third report, a Strategic Marketing Plan, together with a marketing/sales pitch packet, set the stage for implementation. Overall, the initiative's goal is to fully develop Allegany and Garrett counties' potential as an outdoor recreation and lifestyle manufacturing hub and to create jobs, leverage private investment, and use the region's access to natural resources as a marketing tool.

Allegany and Garrett counties are already actively engaged in marketing campaigns to attract visitors to take advantage of the region's outdoor recreation, lifestyle, and tourism assets. In addition to visitors, the marketing initiative implemented via the current project will also bring new businesses, employees, and residents to Western Maryland.

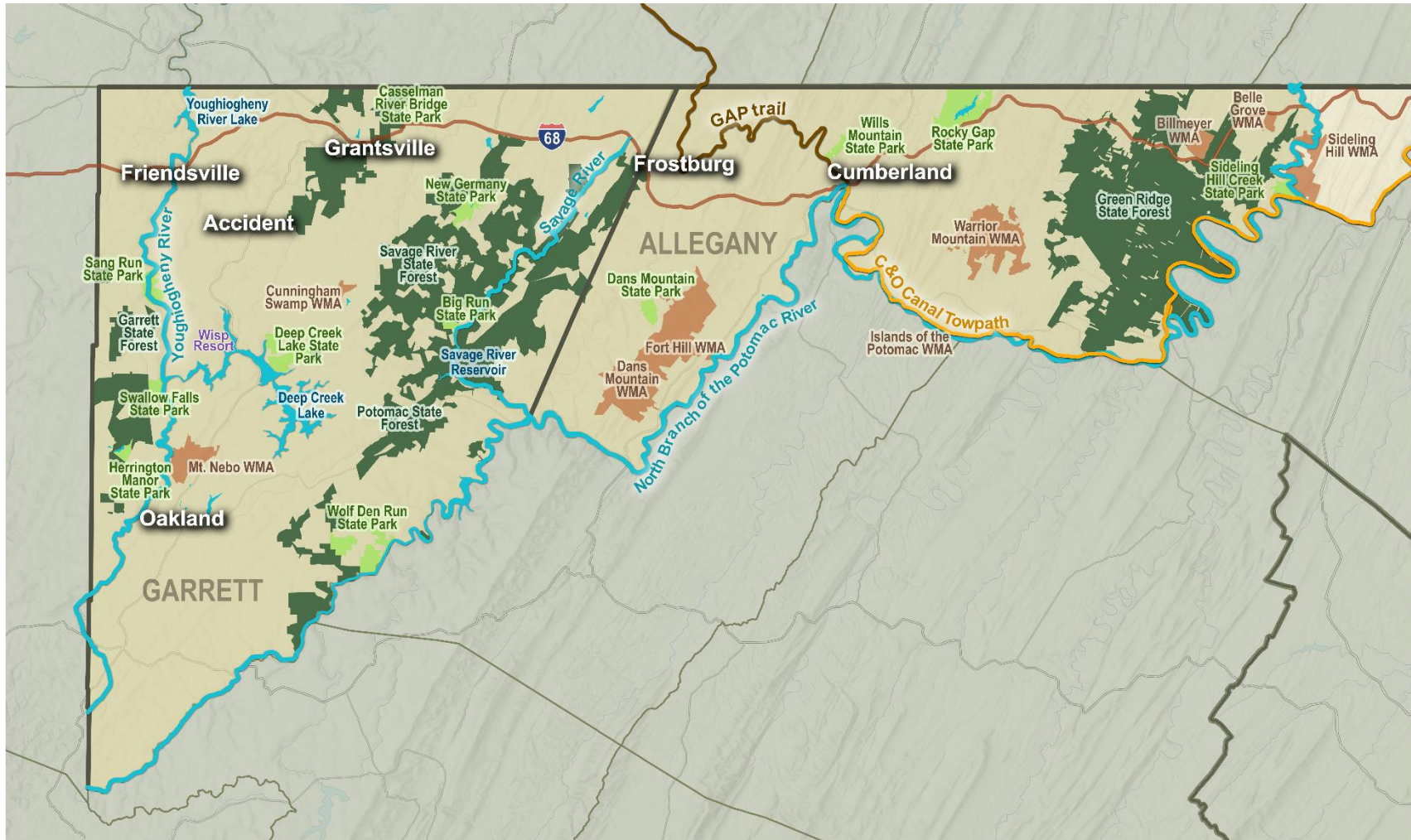
As illustrated in Figure 1, Allegany and Garrett counties are home to a wide variety of outdoor recreation and lifestyle assets, which are described in more detail in Chapter 2 of the Manufacturing Business Attraction Analysis. These two counties are home to 170,000 acres of state parks and state forests, which accounts for 31 percent of all public acreage owned by the State of Maryland. The counties have over 500 miles of developed trail systems, one national park, three state forests, and 12 state parks.

Deep Creek Lake is the center of many of the outdoor recreation opportunities in Western Maryland, but the region also offers world-class whitewater for rafting and kayaking, as well as floating and fishing. The Great Allegheny Passage (GAP) trail and the Chesapeake and Ohio (C&O) Canal Towpath meet at Canal Place in Cumberland and connect Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania with Washington, DC with a trail system of over 330 miles. Thousands of hikers, bikers, and other trail users already traverse these trails.

Wisp Resort, the only downhill ski resort in Maryland, also offers other seasonal activities, including whitewater rafting, kayaking, and golfing. Hiking, hunting, rock climbing, and mountain biking are popular activities in the region, and eBikes are becoming more popular on the GAP trail and other trails where they are allowed. Off-road vehicles (ORVs) are also commonly used, where permitted.

This report focuses on the benefits from visitors to Western Maryland who take advantage of its variety of outdoor recreation assets. It provides a scenario of increased tourism and estimates the potential growth in businesses that would provide goods and services to these additional visitors. Finally, it contemplates how four small communities—Grantsville and Kitzmiller in Garrett County, and Westernport and Oldtown in Allegany County—could share in the increased prosperity of Western Maryland by increasing the number of establishments that cater to visitors.

Figure 1: Key existing outdoor recreation and lifestyle assets



2. ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF INCREASED TOURISM IN ALLEGANY AND GARRETT COUNTIES

2.1 Scenario of increased tourism

Western Maryland already attracts more than 2 million visitors per year, and the number of overnight and day visitors has generally increased year-over-year, with the exception of downturns in 2020 due to the COVID pandemic (Tourism Economics, 2022). Still, the region is poised for additional growth over the long term.

We developed a scenario of increased tourism in Western Maryland based on the trend in growth in visitor spending from 2014 through 2018—before the COVID pandemic. During this period, visitor spending in Allegany County grew at an annual average rate of 2.0 percent. Visitor spending in Garrett County grew at 1.9 percent per year on average, a slightly lower rate than Allegany County. Our scenario of increased tourism results in an increase in visitor spending of \$72 million above the baseline trend by 2026.

GAP trail and C&O Canal Towpath visitors

In 2021, approximately 78,000 people used the GAP trail in Cumberland, and approximately 72,000 people used the GAP trail in Frostburg (Herr, 2022).

In 2019, approximately 131,000 visitors who came to the C&O Canal Towpath from more than 50 miles away visited Cumberland, and approximately 24,000 visited Frostburg (Rockport Analytics, 2021).

2.2 Economic benefits

Visitors to Western Maryland support the region's economy in several ways. They directly impact the economy by spending money at restaurants, retail stores, hotels, ski areas, bike and boat rental and sales shops, outfitters, gas stations, and other establishments. These direct impacts then ripple out through the economy as indirect impacts when the establishments purchase local goods and services. Both the direct and indirect activities generate wages for employees, who in turn spend much of their earnings across the local economy. This third effect, the induced impact, captures local household spending from the direct and indirect impacts.

We used the scenario of increased tourism described above to estimate the corresponding economic impacts associated with the increased visitor spending across Western Maryland. For this analysis, we used the IMPLAN model, which accounts for the unique demographic and industrial profiles of the region.

The \$72 million increase in annual visitor spending in Western Maryland in 2026 is estimated to increase total output (sales and inventory changes) by \$103 million, as shown in Table 1. The direct impact on output of \$65 million reflects the leakage of \$7 million in sales to account for the value of out-of-state imports.

Table 1: Estimated economic impact in Western Maryland from an increase in tourism, 2026 (million \$, except jobs)

Economic impact	Output	Value added	Labor income	Jobs
Direct impact	\$65	\$30	\$16	521
Indirect impact	\$27	\$12	\$6	165
Induced impact	\$11	\$6	\$3	71
Subtotal, secondary impact	\$38	\$17	\$9	236
Total	\$103	\$47	\$25	757

Source: IMPLAN analysis performed by Downstream Strategies. Note: Dollars are 2023 dollars. Jobs are annual jobs. Totals may not match due to rounding.

This new economic activity from visitor spending by 2026 would generate an estimated 757 jobs annually, which would provide \$25 million in wages, salaries, benefits, and proprietor income. This labor income is part of the \$47 million that is generated within the region as value added, which also includes business profits and revenues for government services.

2.3 Small business development needs

An increase of \$103 million in sales and 757 jobs would result in the growth of many businesses, as well as the establishment of new businesses, across Western Maryland. Much of this growth would be concentrated in four sectors critical to supporting tourism:

- accommodations,
- entertainment and recreation,
- restaurants and bars, and
- retail establishments.

To support the growth in these four sectors, most other sectors in the region will also grow. Growth in these other sectors is identified in a fifth category called “all other sectors” (See Table 2).

The increase in tourism sales in the four tourism-specific industries would require an estimated 402 additional jobs in Western Maryland, associated with \$36 million in additional annual sales. The largest share of this activity is estimated to occur in the *Restaurant and bars* sector, with 260 jobs and \$21 million in sales. The *Retail establishments* and the *Entertainment and recreation* sectors, combined, account for about 30 percent of the total tourism-based jobs that would be generated in 2026. The *Accommodations* sector, which includes a wide range of establishments including hotels, casino hotels, and short-term rentals, is estimated to account for an additional 32 jobs and \$4 million in total annual sales.

As illustrated in Table 3, our scenario of increased tourism would result in approximately 25 new business establishments in the four tourism sectors—if all establishments were an average size for their sector. The range of 12 to 90 new establishments accounts for the large variation in the potential size of new establishments.

Among the four tourism sectors, the largest number of new establishments would likely be in the *Restaurants and bars* sector. This sector may include large, full-service restaurants that employ dozens of servers and cooks, or small “mom-and-pop” pizza shops that employ a few family members who serve customers, make the pizza, and do the dishes. Further, this sector includes not just full-service restaurants, but also limited-service restaurants with counter service only, as well as bars and caterers.

Table 2: Annual new jobs and sales from an increase in tourism, 2026

Sector	Jobs	Sales (million \$)
Accommodations	32	\$4
Entertainment and recreation	53	\$5
Restaurants and bars	260	\$21
Retail establishments	57	\$6
Total, tourism sectors	402	\$36
All other sectors	355	\$67
Total	757	\$103

Source: IMPLAN analysis performed by Downstream Strategies. Note: Dollars are 2023 dollars.

The range in the number of new establishments for the *Entertainment and recreation* sector reflects the fact that this sector includes many different types of businesses visited by tourists, such as outfitters, bowling alleys, ski areas, theaters, miniature golf courses, and driving ranges.

The *Retail establishments* sector could also include a variety of establishments frequented by visitors, including, for example, grocery stores, antique shops, gift shops, gas stations, and liquor stores.

Potential growth in the *Accommodations* sector may include anything from a small bed and breakfast to a moderate-size hotel to a large resort. The number of visitors accommodated by each business, and the number of employees per business, will depend on market forces and businesses choices that are beyond the scope of this analysis.

Table 3: Potential new establishments in Western Maryland's direct tourism industries, 2026

Sector	Range	Average
Accommodations	2 to 16	2
Entertainment and recreation	1 to 11	4
Restaurants and bars	6 to 50	16
Retail establishments	3 to 11	3
Total	12 to 90	25

Sources: Analysis performed by Downstream Strategies. Establishment sizes from U.S. Census Bureau (2023).

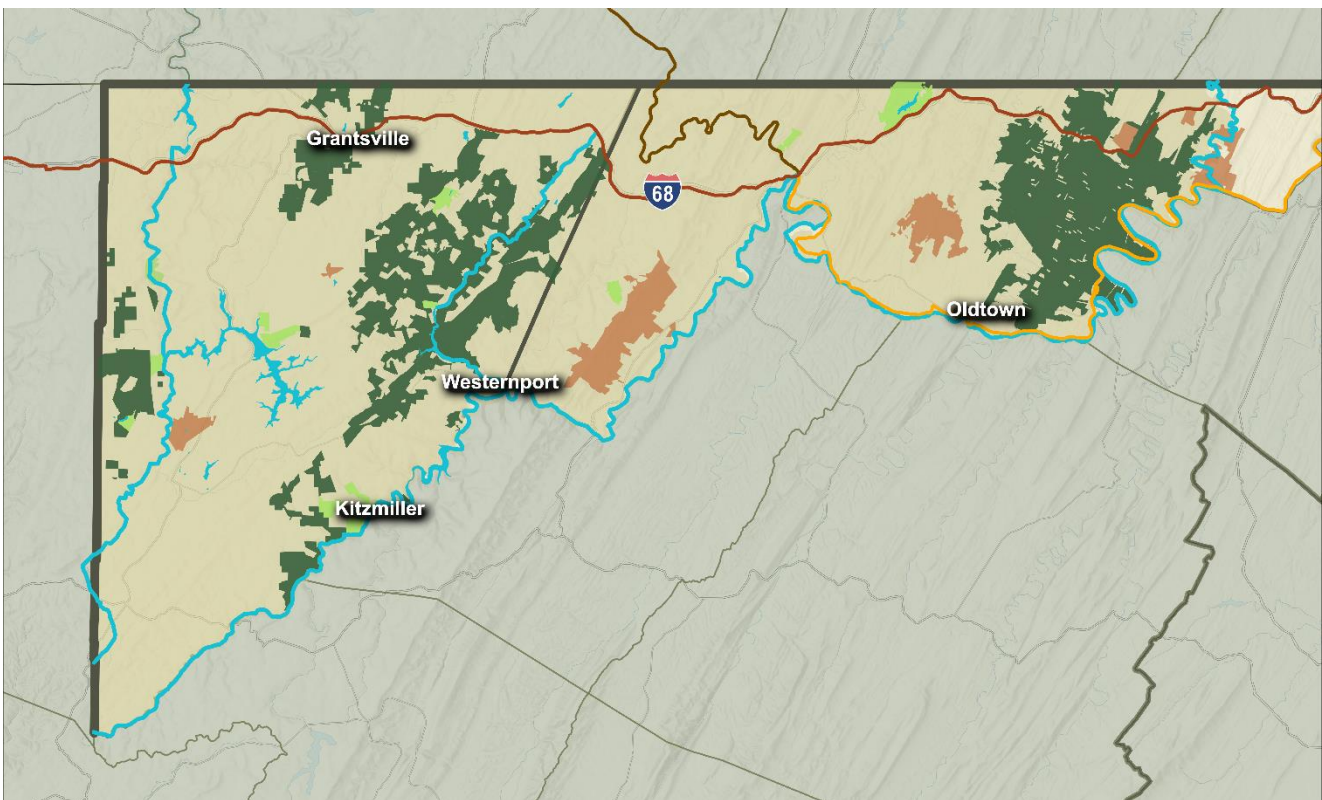
3. LEVERAGING REGIONAL GROWTH IN SMALL COMMUNITIES

The analysis in Chapter 2 of the number of new businesses and jobs supported by an increase in tourism was based on a scenario of increased visitor spending across Western Maryland. It makes no prediction of the specific towns within Allegany or Garrett counties where these new businesses will be opened.

Based on feedback received from the steering committee for this project, we focus the rest of this report on four communities that are located close to many of the region’s outdoor recreation assets and heritage tourism sites. While they are not in the portions of Allegany and Garrett counties where significant visitor spending is already occurring, strategic planning and investments can help capture a portion of the increased prosperity that will come to the region as visitor spending grows.

As illustrated in Figure 2, these communities include Grantsville, Kitzmiller, Westernport, and Oldtown. Grantsville is located in northern Garrett County on Interstate 68. The other three communities—Kitzmiller in Garrett County and Westernport and Oldtown in Allegany County—are located along the counties’ southern borders with West Virginia, along the North Branch of the Potomac River.

Figure 2: The four communities of interest



3.1 Grantsville

Grantsville, located in Garrett County, has a rich history and a heritage of hospitality. In the early 1700s, before Grantsville was established, Native Americans established permanent camps along the river. Later, a settlement called Little Crossings rose where Penn Alps and the old Casselman Bridge are located now. George Washington and General Braddock visited this area on their way to Pittsburgh.

Grantsville was named in honor of Daniel Grant of Baltimore, who came to acquire a 1,100-acre tract of land called the Cornucopia in 1785. After the National Road was constructed in the early 1800s to link Cumberland with Ohio and points west, entrepreneurs built several hotels to take advantage of the influx of travelers, including the Casselman Drovers Inn, built in 1842, and the Casselman Hotel, built in 1907.

Stanton's Mill was built in 1797 to operate as a grist mill and included a log tavern, general store, blacksmith shop, and sawmill. The iconic Penn Alps Restaurant, which is adjacent to the mill, was a former inn. These two historical hallmarks are part of the Artisan's Village, a point of reference for local history that is connected to the Casselman River Bridge State Park. (The Historical Marker Database, 2022; Grantsville, 2022a)

Located along Interstate 68, and with the Old National Road running through downtown, Grantsville is well-positioned for visitors from many of the nation's population centers, including Washington, DC, Baltimore, and Pittsburgh. The Grantsville area is also accessible by Amtrak, which has a stop in Cumberland with routes to major cities east and west of Western Maryland.

3.1.1 Nearby outdoor recreation assets

Grantsville is located in close proximity to a number of state parks and forests, including Casselman River Bridge State Park, Savage River State Forest, Big Run State Park, and New Germany State Park (See Figure 3 below and Figure 1 above).

The historical Casselman River Bridge State Park is a four-acre parcel within walking distance from Grantsville. When the 80-foot bridge was erected in 1813, it became the longest single-span stone arch bridge in the United States and served as an important link on the Old National Road. The park is a popular destination for walking, biking, picnicking, fly fishing, and photography.

Adjacent to the park, Spruce Forest Artisan Village is a venue for artists to showcase and sell their work and for visitors to interact with resident artisans while they are working in their studios. It also allows people to experience the agricultural foundations of Grantsville by visiting the recently restored Stanton's Mill. Three restored cabins also showcase the heritage of the region.

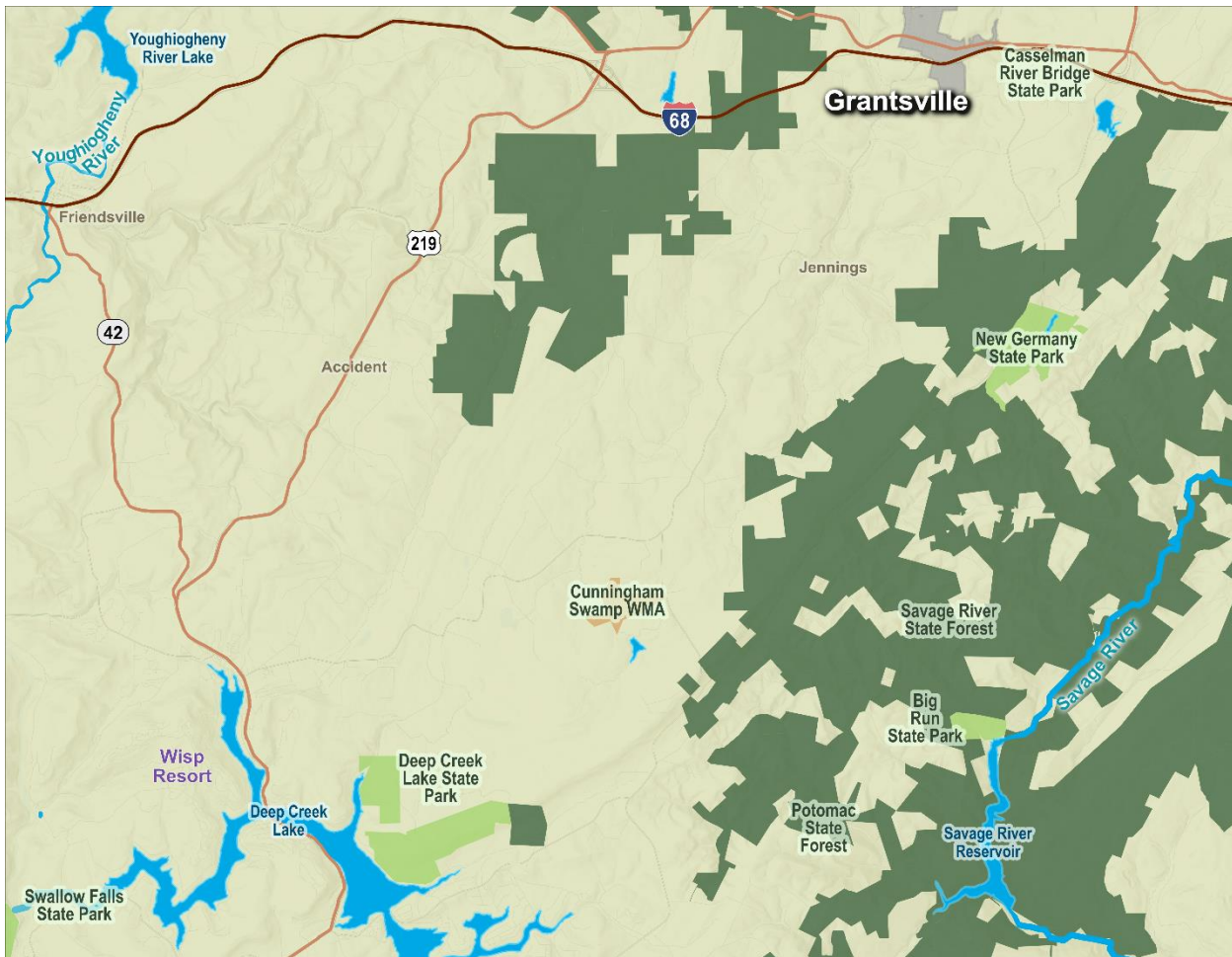
Located within 15 minutes of Grantsville, New Germany State Park has 10 miles of multi-use trails and a small lake for fishing, swimming, and paddling. It offers 12 cabins, campsites with restrooms, motorhome accommodation, picnic tables, and a boat ramp. The park also hosts a nature center dedicated to environmental education, a native plant garden next to the New Germany Lake, and the New Germany Lake House, a multi-purpose building that includes a special event conference space.

Some of the best backcountry hiking in Garrett County is found further south of Grantsville in Savage River State Forest. With specific areas designated as wildlands, Savage River offers rugged landscapes and plenty of wildlife. A 24-mile backpacker loop incorporates different trails, each with its own level of difficulty for hiking, birdwatching, mountain biking, hunting, snowshoeing, and cross-country skiing. Some trails allow off-road vehicles. The 14-mile Meadow Mountain Trail, with one of the best overlooks in the county, can be accessed near Grantsville. Savage River State Forest also offers year-round primitive camping with limited amenities, and Savage River Reservoir is available

for boating. During early spring through fall, the reservoir is stocked with native brook trout. Ice fishing, catch-and-release fishing, fly fishing, and shoreline fishing are all available.

Big Run State Park is located at the mouth of the Savage River Reservoir and is a popular location for primitive camping in the vicinity of Savage River State Forest. Campers have access to fishing, hiking, and hunting activities, and a boat ramp at Big Run State Park provides access to the reservoir.

Figure 3: Grantsville and nearby outdoor recreation assets



In addition to these public lands, Grantsville is also close to other outdoor recreation assets in Western Maryland. The Youghiogheny River, with its whitewater boating, is located approximately 15 miles west of town. Only slightly further are Deep Creek Lake and Wisp Resort. Approximately 25 miles to the east, the GAP trail and the C&O Canal Towpath meet at Canal Place in Cumberland.

In summary, key outdoor recreation activities in the vicinity of Grantsville include heritage tourism, camping, mountain biking, hiking, backpacking, bird watching, hunting, skiing, fishing, swimming, and boating.

3.1.2 Tourism infrastructure

To benefit economically from its outdoor recreation assets, Grantsville must have lodging, dining, and other businesses at which tourists spend money. As illustrated in Table 4, Grantsville and the nearby area already offer many lodging and dining options.

Table 4: Grantsville tourism infrastructure

Service type	Description
Accommodations	Comfort Inn Ella’s Enchanted Treehouses Gordon’s Getaway The Casselman Inn and Restaurant
Restaurants and bars	Arby’s Burger King Cornucopia Café Ellie & Annie’s Bakery Grantsville American Legion Post High Country Creamery and Market IHOP Little Caesars McDonald’s Penn Alps Restaurant and Craft Shop Subway The Casselman Inn and Restaurant

Sources: ESRI (2022), Google (2022), Grantsville (2022b). Note: Short-term vacation rentals are also available in the region.

3.1.3 Recommendations

Grantsville has convenient access to Interstate 68, is close to numerous outdoor recreation assets in Allegany and Garrett counties, and already boasts a variety of lodging and dining options for visitors. As documented in Table 2 above, our scenario of tourism growth in Western Maryland would result in numerous new businesses, including accommodations, restaurants and bars, entertainment and recreation businesses, and retail establishments. Grantsville is well-positioned to draw many of these new businesses that would cater to a growing number of visitors engaged in nearby outdoor recreation and heritage tourism activities.

- **Accommodations.** Evaluate the opportunity for additional lodging options in and around Grantsville.
- **Restaurants and bars.** Evaluate the opportunity for additional restaurants and bars in and around Grantsville, to complement the existing establishments. Establishments that cater to residents in addition to visitors would be more likely to thrive.
- **Entertainment and recreation.** Evaluate the opportunity additional outfitters to serve an increasing number of visitors.
- **Retail establishments.** Evaluate the opportunity for additional retail stores to provide goods not just to visitors, but also to residents.

3.2 Kitzmiller

The Garrett County town of Kitzmiller rose around the woolen mill that Ebenezer Kitzmiller built in 1853. The coming of the railroad in the 1880s brought a lumber boom; later, coal mining became the town's economic engine. At its peak, Kitzmiller boasted a population of 1,800. A movie theater, a bank, three barber shops, three grocery stores, two dry goods stores, and a pharmacy served its residents.

Located adjacent to the North Branch of the Potomac River, Kitzmiller has experienced several floods that threatened the town's existence. The 1924 flood, for example, nearly destroyed Kitzmiller. In 1963, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers tore down a block of homes and the movie emporium to widen the river and build levees to reduce the threat of future floods. (Meyer, 1979)

Kitzmiller's coal miners worked at the Hamill Coal & Coke Company in Blaine and in the nearby towns of Shallmar and Vindex, among other places. When the mines closed approximately 30 years ago, the town lost its primary economic engine. Today, only approximately 200 people live in Kitzmiller.

Kitzmiller is not located on an interstate highway. The Cumberland and Frostburg exits from Interstate 68 are approximately 35-40 miles north of town. The closest urban area, Oakland, is approximately 15 miles to the west.

3.2.1 Nearby outdoor recreation assets

As illustrated in Figure 4 below and Figure 1 above, Kitzmiller provides access to many outdoor recreation assets, including Wolf Den Run State Park, Jennings Randolph Lake, Potomac State Forest, and the North Branch of the Potomac River. Also, Deep Creek Lake, along with that area's recreational assets and tourist infrastructure, is within a 30-minute drive of Kitzmiller.

Wolf Den Run State Park is the closest state park or forest. This new state park is popular with ORV riders because it offers access to the largest collection of ORV trails in Maryland. It is divided into three areas. Immediately adjacent to Kitzmiller are the Potomac River Area and the North Hill Area, which have numerous ORV trails and provide access to three miles of the North Branch of the Potomac River. Additional ORV trails are located in the Huckleberry Rocks Area, only about a mile to the north and west. The Wolf Den Campground is very close to the Huckleberry Rocks Area. In addition to ORV riders and campers, Wolf Den Run State Park attracts hikers and hunters, as well as anglers who fish in the North Branch of the Potomac River and the park's two cold water trout streams.

Jennings Randolph Lake, located downstream from Kitzmiller on the North Branch of the Potomac River, is managed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The lake itself covers almost 1,000 acres and provides numerous types of water-based recreation, including fishing, swimming, boating, and water skiing. Along the shore, people can hike, bird watch, hunt, and camp. A boat launch can accommodate cars and trailers and is used to provide access to motorboats, sailboats, and other watercraft. Just downstream, the Barnum Whitewater Area is created by releases from Jennings Randolph Lake. This seven-mile portion of the North Branch of the Potomac River flows down a continuous gradient of sandstone ledges and cobbles and provides Class I, II, and III rapids interrupted by calm water allow for relaxation and swimming. On the West Virginia side of the lake, Shaw Beach provides easy access for swimmers.

The North Branch of the Potomac River upstream from Jennings Randolph Lake provides opportunities for additional outdoor recreation activities. As mentioned above, three miles of the river are within Wolf Den Run State Park. Fishing, boating, and tubing are all possible near Kitzmiller.

Two portions of the Potomac State Forest are very close to Kitzmiller: the Lostland/Wallman/Laurel areas west and south of town, and the Backbone area north of town. The Lostland/Wallman/Laurel area provides access for anglers to fish in the North Branch of the Potomac River. Lostland Run and Laurel Run provide opportunities for cold-water anglers to fish for wild brook trout and stocked brown and rainbow trout. Hunting is also permitted in the forest. The forest has many miles of trails open to hikers, and in many locations, mountain bikers and horseback riders. ORVs are only permitted in certain areas, including Burkholder Road and Wallman Road. (MDNR, 2022a)

Within Kitzmiller, the paved Kitzmiller River Walk runs alongside the North Branch of the Potomac River. Across the street is the Kitzmiller Botanical Garden, which features a pond, a trail, paved walkways, a bridge, and a stream. (Garrett County Chamber of Commerce, 2023)

Figure 4: Kitzmiller and nearby outdoor recreation assets



Kitzmiller’s Coal Heritage Museum highlights the area’s rich coal mining history. Nearby, the restored Kitzmiller Company Store is now home to the Coal Bucket Café.

In summary, key outdoor recreation activities in the vicinity of Kitzmiller include ORV riding, camping, mountain biking, hiking, backpacking, bird watching, hunting, fishing, swimming, water skiing, boating, and heritage tourism.

3.2.2 Tourism infrastructure

Despite its strategic location so close to several outdoor recreation assets, Kitzmiller’s tourism infrastructure has not been built out. As illustrated in Table 5, the town does not offer any lodging other than short-term vacation rentals. The only dining option is the Coal Bucket Restaurant. No outfitters offer ORVs for use at Wolf Den Run State Park or boats, tubes, or fishing equipment for use on the North Branch of the Potomac River or at Jennings Randolph Lake.

Table 5: Kitzmiller tourism infrastructure

Service type	Description
Accommodations	None
Restaurants and bars	Coal Bucket Restaurant

Sources: ESRI (2022), Google (2022), Kitzmiller (2022). Note: Short-term vacation rentals are also available in the region.

3.2.3 Recommendations

Kitzmiller has the potential to build out its tourism infrastructure to attract an increasing number of tourists visiting nearby outdoor recreation assets. As documented in Table 2 above, our scenario of tourism growth in Western Maryland would result in numerous new businesses in a variety of sectors. While Kitzmiller is a very small community, and new businesses would want to carefully assess the potential to draw visitors to new establishments, suggested next steps include:

- **Accommodations.** Evaluate the opportunity for lodging in and around Kitzmiller. While camping is currently offered at Wolf Den Run State Park and at Jennings Randolph Lake, many ORV riders, boaters, and other visitors likely desire other options. Increasing the number and variety of short-term vacation rentals in people’s residences may be the most immediate opportunity.
- **Restaurants and bars.** Evaluate the opportunity for additional restaurants in and around Kitzmiller, to complement the existing Coal Bucket Restaurant. Restaurants that cater to residents in addition to visitors would be more likely to thrive.
- **Entertainment and recreation.** Evaluate the opportunity for an outfitter to rent ORVs to users of Wolf Den Run State Park. Now, visitors must bring their own vehicles. Outfitters may also be able to provide boats, tubes, fishing gear, and shuttle services to people recreating on the North Branch of the Potomac River, nearby trout streams, and Jennings Randolph Lake.
- **Retail establishments.** Evaluate the opportunity for additional retail stores to provide goods not just to visitors, but also to residents.

3.3 Westernport

Westernport, in Allegany County, is very close to the Garrett County line and is located on the North Branch of the Potomac River downstream from Jennings Randolph Lake. It received its name in the 1790s as the westernmost navigable port town on the Potomac River. In the late 18th Century and the early-to-mid 19th Century, coal and timber was transported down George's Creek through Westernport and into the Potomac, for transport to Great Falls, Virginia. In the 1880s, the Piedmont and Cumberland Railway was built through Westernport, connecting the town to Cumberland.

Downtown Westernport has several attractive architectural hallmarks such as the Saint Peter Roman Catholic Church complex, which was built in 1873 and includes the church, a historic brick rectory serving as the priest and parish residences and offices, and an open backyard garden. Westernport boasts an urban infrastructure with well-maintained sidewalks, pedestrian crossings, and street lighting. The Westernport Heritage Society Museum, which preserves memorabilia from the Industrial Revolution, is located in town. It houses materials from Westernport and the adjacent

communities of Luke, Maryland and Piedmont, West Virginia, as well as materials related to the town's coal mining and papermaking heritage.

Formerly located just upstream from Westernport, the Luke Paper Mill closed in 2019 after 131 years of operation. Despite the significant impact on its workers and the local economy, closing the papermill did result in improved water quality in the North Branch of the Potomac River, which is helping improve fishing and other river-based recreation opportunities.

Today, Westernport's population of about 2,000 people is about 10 times the population of Kitzmiller. While it is not located on an interstate highway, Westernport is only about a half-hour drive from Cumberland and Frostburg to the north and Oakland to the west.

3.3.1 Nearby outdoor recreation assets

As illustrated in Figure 5 below and Figure 1 above, Westernport is nestled between the Savage River Reservoir and the North Branch of the Potomac River and provides easy access to several outdoor recreation assets, including the Savage River, the Savage River Reservoir, the North Branch of the Potomac River, Big Run State Park, and the South Savage Mountain Natural Area.

Westernport lies along the North Branch of the Potomac River, approximately 20 miles downstream from Jennings Randolph Lake. It is also just two miles downstream from the confluence of the Savage River, which drains the Savage River Reservoir. Discharges from these two reservoirs make the North Branch Potomac River cold and suitable for trout. The North Branch of the Potomac River has three identified management zones. Of these three, the zone downstream of Jennings Randolph Lake—and the zone between Westernport and Cumberland—both have beautiful and remote tailwater opportunities for anglers who fish by wading in the river or by floating in a raft with a guide. In Westernport, a soft access site to the North Branch of the Potomac River on the east side of the Route 46 bridge along Front Street is one location for non-motorized boats to access the river. (Allegany County, 2022)

Just west of Westernport, in Bloomington, the Savage River meets the North Branch of the Potomac River. The Big Savage Mountain Trail and the reservoir boat ramps are hidden gems for fly fishing, rafting, and hiking. On the Savage River Reservoir, two boat ramps provide access for whitewater rafting, non-motorized boating, float fishing, and fly fishing. Big Run State Park sits at the northern end of the Savage River Reservoir, offering campsites.

The South Savage Mountain Natural Area is a large, forested landscape nestled between the southern end of Big Savage Mountain and Savage River Reservoir. This forest—one of the last remaining old growth forests in Maryland—provides key habitat for a variety of plant and animal populations, including rare species such as the cerulean warbler, the eastern red bat, the Appalachian cottontail, bobcats, and rare plants. The area does not provide facilities or marked trails, but campsites are located at the Big Savage Trailhead. For hikers, the Big Savage Mountain Trailhead, located 10-15 minutes east of Westernport, offers a 17-mile mountaintop trail crossing Savage River State Forest and bordering the entrance to the Savage River Dam. Backpacking and primitive camping are popular activities.

Local parks in Westernport include Luke Legacy Park and Creekside Park. Creekside Park is located along George's Creek and provides access to the creek, as well as playground equipment, a pavilion, and picnic tables.

In summary, key outdoor recreation activities in the vicinity of Westernport include camping; mountain biking, hiking, backpacking, bird watching, hunting, fishing, swimming, boating, and heritage tourism.

Figure 5: Westernport and nearby outdoor recreation assets



3.3.2 Tourism infrastructure

Westernport, like Kitzmiller, is a river town near many outdoor recreation assets. As illustrated in Table 6, other than short-term vacation rentals, the town does not offer any lodging. However, it does offer several restaurants. Savage River Outfitters in Bloomington, Maryland and Clyde's River Guides & Outfitters in Wiley Ford, West Virginia service this portion of the river.

Table 6: Westernport tourism infrastructure

Service type	Description
Accommodations	None
Restaurants and bars	Chat & Chew Restaurant Fox's Pizza Den McDonald's Port West Restaurant Subway

Sources: ESRI (2022), Google (2022), Westernport (2022). Note: Short-term vacation rentals are also available in the region.

3.3.3 Recommendations

As documented in Table 2 above, our scenario of tourism growth in Western Maryland would result in numerous new businesses, including accommodations, restaurants and bars, entertainment and recreation businesses, and retail establishments. Westernport therefore has the potential to add to its existing tourism infrastructure to provide services to visitors who might enjoy using the town as a base for exploring its nearby outdoor recreation attractions. While it is small, it is located very close to several other towns in Maryland and across the river in West Virginia. This local population base could provide additional clientele, in addition to visitors, to help new lodging, dining, or retail establishments succeed.

An additional asset in Westernport is its historical industrial and commercial infrastructure that could be creatively restored and reused to develop lodging, restaurants, or retail establishments. Just across the river, Piedmont, West Virginia complements Westernport's historical area, with interesting architectural character. Reusing abandoned, historical buildings in Piedmont could potentially complement the expansion of tourism infrastructure in Westernport.

- **Accommodations.** Evaluate the opportunity for additional lodging options in and around Westernport.
- **Restaurants and bars.** Evaluate the opportunity for additional restaurants and bars in and around Westernport, to complement the existing establishments. Establishments that cater to residents in addition to visitors would be more likely to thrive.
- **Entertainment and recreation.** Evaluate the opportunity additional outfitters to serve an increasing number of visitors.
- **Retail establishments.** Evaluate the opportunity for additional retail stores to provide goods not just to visitors, but also to residents.

3.4 Oldtown

While also located on the North Branch of the Potomac River, Oldtown in Allegany County is approximately 40 miles downstream from Westernport. Compared to the other three communities highlighted in this report, Oldtown is the smallest, with a 2020 population of only 30 people.

The town is located along the C&O Canal Towpath and boasts a rich history even before the canal was built. Early Native American settlements in the area date back thousands of years, and the town's original name, Shawnee Oldtown, is a reference to that tradition. Opessa Street is named for Shawnee leader King Opessa.

In the early 1740s, Thomas Cresap, frontiersman and friend to George Washington, came to Oldtown from Washington County, Maryland. One of the oldest structures in Allegany County today is the Michael Cresap House. The low water crossing of the North Branch of the Potomac River at Oldtown was used during the French and Indian War and later during the Civil War. Four C&O Canal lockhouses and a store operated by the Carder and Wilson families are located next to the canal. (C&O Canal Trust, 2022a)

While Oldtown is remote, Cumberland is only approximately 15 miles to the northwest. Also, the C&O Canal Towpath links Washington, DC with Cumberland, where trail users can also access the Great Allegheny Passage trail. An estimated 137,400 visitors already use the Allegany County section of the C&O Canal Towpath—including visitors from Washington, DC, Baltimore, Pittsburgh, and other major metropolitan areas. (Rockport Analytics, 2021)

Oldtown's history provides opportunities for heritage tourism, including the Michael Cresap House. This house was built in 1762 and is one of the only remnants of the frontier the Cresap family built. After saving it from destruction in 1961, Reverend Irvin (Cy) Allen restored the house and filled it

with artifacts. The oldest surviving building in Allegany County, it is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and maintained as a local museum. (C&O Canal Trust, 2022b)

Oldtown was once a bustling C&O Canal supply center. The area from Lock 69 through Lock 71 has been restored and rewatered. These three locks, the last composite locks on the Canal, are on a half-mile stretch in Oldtown. At Lock 70, a white frame lockhouse in the center of Oldtown allows visitors to see the inside of a lockhouse and displays a small exhibit on Oldtown's history. Also at Lock 70, a wooden covered canal bridge was the scene of several Civil War engagements.

3.4.1 Nearby outdoor recreation assets

At Lock 71, a low concrete dam in the canal creates a four-mile fishing area near Oldtown. Built in 1945, Battie Mixon's Fishing Hole is named after the Allegany County game warden who conceived of the idea. The fishing pond is well stocked with one pool reserved for children. It hosts an annual fishing rodeo. The site is designated as a put-and-take trout fishing pond, and power boats are not allowed. (Potomac River Guide, 2022) Other nearby attractions on the C&O Canal Towpath include several hiker/biker campsites such as the Town Creek Aqueduct site.

Green Ridge State Forest, the largest contiguous public land in Maryland, is immediately north and east of Oldtown. From the nearby Log Roll Overlook, one can see a vista of the 49,000 acres of Green Ridge State Forest. Over 80 miles of trails in the forest are open to hikers, mountain bikers, and horseback riders. The North Branch of the Potomac River runs adjacent to much of the forest and is runnable year-round. A canoe campsite is available at Bond's Landing. With a permit, visitors can use one of the 100 designated primitive campsites dispersed throughout Green Ridge State Forest. Fishing opportunities at Green Ridge State Forest include the Potomac River where bass, catfish, muskellunge, and sunfish are sought. Put-and-take trout fishing is popular on Fifteen Mile Creek, Sidling Hill Creek, and White Sulphur and Orchard ponds during the spring. Hunting is permitted throughout the forest, except where posted. (MDNR, 2022b)

In summary, key outdoor recreation activities in the vicinity of Oldtown include heritage tourism, camping, mountain biking, hiking, backpacking, bird watching, horseback riding, hunting, fishing, swimming, and boating.

3.4.2 Tourism infrastructure

Like Westernport and Kitzmiller, Oldtown is a river town, As illustrated in Figure 6, Oldtown offers very few lodging and dining options. Clyde's River Guides & Outfitters is located nearby in Wiley Ford, West Virginia.

Table 7: Oldtown tourism infrastructure

Service type	Description
Accommodations	Lock 70 School House Inn
Restaurants and bars	Millstone Country Store (in Spring Gap) Schoolhouse Kitchen

Sources: ESRI (2022), Google (2022). Note: Short-term vacation rentals are also available in the region.

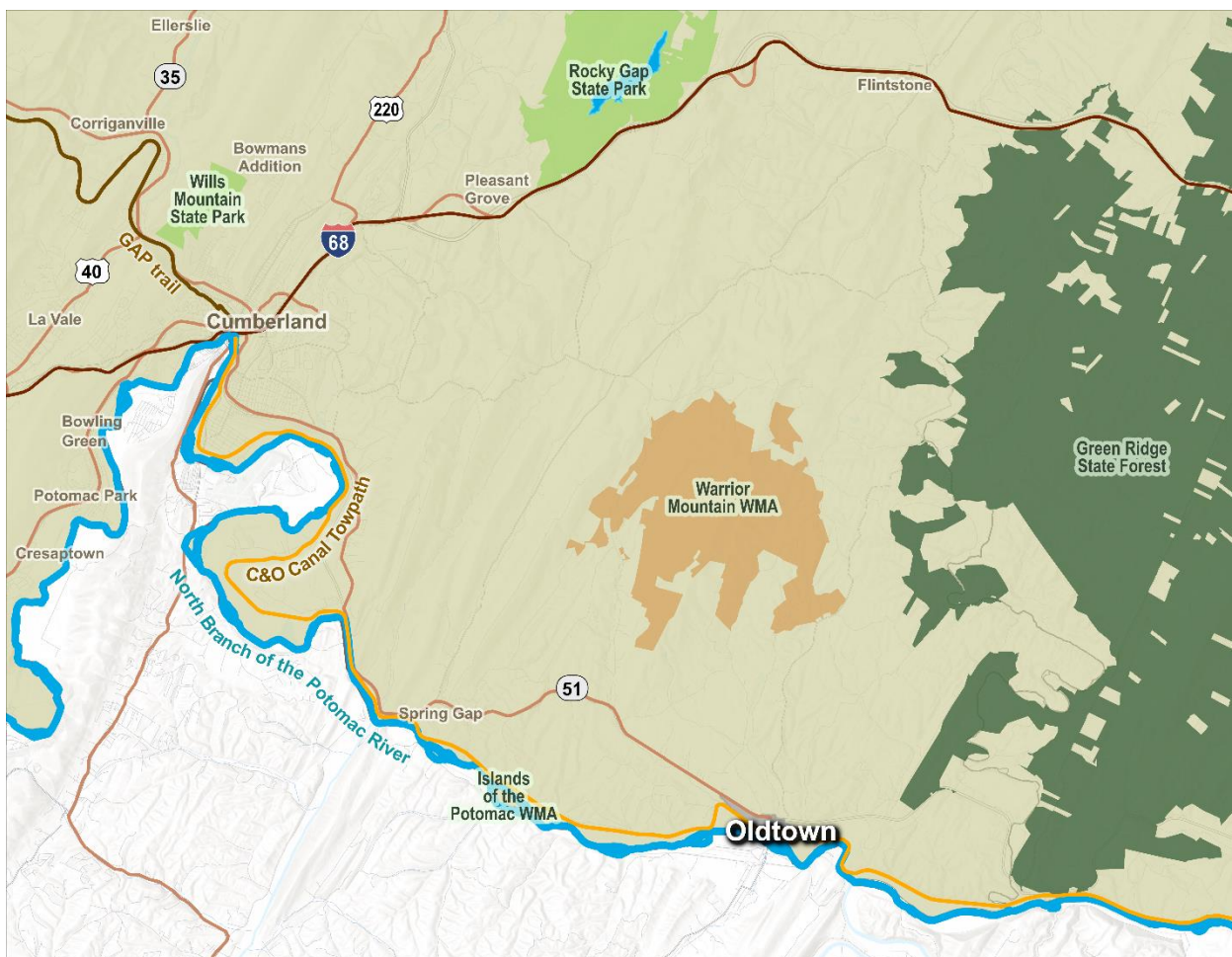
3.4.3 Recommendations

As documented in Table 2 above, our scenario of tourism growth in Western Maryland would result in numerous new businesses in a variety of sectors. Oldtown therefore has the potential to add to its existing tourism infrastructure to provide services for visitors.

- **Accommodations.** The most immediate opportunities appear to be to attract more of the existing, and potentially growing number of users of the C&O Canal Towpath to stop in Oldtown. Expanding the number of nearby short-term vacation rentals in residents' existing homes would be a logical first step.
- **Restaurants and bars.** A coffee shop and a dining establishment that caters to cyclists and hikers may also succeed in Oldtown by selling food and drinks popular with cyclists, including, for example, burgers and craft beer.
- **Entertainment and recreation.** Evaluate the opportunity additional outfitters to serve an increasing number of visitors.
- **Retail establishments.** A gas station and an ATM could also provide services for visitors. Further, the existing lockhouses could sell supplies that are used by day and overnight users of the Towpath such as outdoor gear, food, and drinks.

In addition to opening new establishments, some relatively simple projects can make a difference. For example, upgraded amenities along the Towpath such as bike racks, picnic areas with new tables and grills, trash cans, and dog waste containers can be installed. The lockhouses can also include restrooms and information about nearby lodging, dining, heritage, and outdoor recreation opportunities, to help make it easy visitors to decide to spend more time and money in the areas.

Figure 6: Oldtown and nearby outdoor recreation assets



4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As more people visit Western Maryland, Allegany and Garrett counties can support new businesses, including accommodations, restaurants and bars, entertainment and recreation businesses, and retail establishments. Grantsville, Kitzmiller, Westernport, and Oldtown all have opportunities to share the benefits of this economic development due to their proximity to outdoor recreation assets and heritage tourism sites.

Grantsville. Grantsville is the outlier among these four towns because it is located on Interstate 68 and already provides a number of lodging and dining options for tourists. Still, additional businesses can be supported as tourism increases in Western Maryland.

Kitzmiller, Westernport, and Oldtown are much more remote towns along the North Branch of the Potomac River. Still, each of these three towns have unique opportunities to capture some of the increased visitor spending.

Kitzmiller. Because it is located so close to Wolf Den Run State Park, Kitzmiller would be a logical location for an outfitter that rented ORVs for use at the park's popular trails. An outfitter could also provide boats, tubes, fishing gear, and shuttle services to people recreating on the North Branch of the Potomac River, nearby trout streams, and Jennings Randolph Lake.

Westernport. Westernport, the largest of these three river towns, is very close to several other towns in Maryland and West Virginia. This relatively larger local population is a resource that could provide additional clientele, in addition to visitors, to help new lodging, dining, or retail establishments succeed. An additional asset in Westernport is its historical industrial and commercial infrastructure that could be creatively restored and reused.

Oldtown. Thousands of cyclists and hikers from near and far already visit Oldtown on the C&O Canal Towpath. New establishments that cater to these visitors—along with projects that help market the community as a destination—should be prioritized so that Oldtown can share in the benefits of an increasing number of visitors to Western Maryland.

While Western Maryland's existing, thriving tourist destinations will certainly benefit from an increase in visitation, Grantsville, Kitzmiller, Westernport, and Oldtown—as well as other small communities in Allegany and Garrett counties—can reinvest in their communities and use an increase in tourism to help grow and diversify their local economies.

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