

Gateway programs enhance the image of a community, which may encourage business development. Program activities may include physical improvements and land use controls.

Physical improvements within Allegany County are needed along Route 36 and gateways into the City of Cumberland due to blighted property, lack of sidewalks, signage, and lighting. In terms of land use controls, land use that negatively impacts the image of the area is problematic. Removal of blighted property, removal of trash and controlling land use will improve the “Gateways” and overall economic development.

### **10.7.2 Business Retention and Expansion**

Business retention and expansion strategies focus on satisfying the needs of existing businesses in the County. Relationship development between existing employers and local government aids in the compilation of information that may be utilized to reduce business costs, improve competitiveness, increase markets and provide opportunities for infrastructure enhancement. Implementing business retention and expansion strategies are the most cost-effective and flexible strategies in economic development.

Retaining and expanding businesses such as the four major employers groups within Allegany County is a top priority. These include Health Care & Social Services, Education Services and Manufacturing

### **10.7.3 Business Attraction**

The goal of business attraction is to focus on identifying companies outside of the County and enticing them to locate their business or parts of their business within the County. This goal would aid in securing new jobs and investments and replacing closed businesses. Business closure is part of the economic cycle, however those closed businesses need to be replaced to increase the overall health of the community.

Targeting specific types of businesses that correspond with the overall character of the Region is important. These targeted types would include businesses that relate to the current industries already located within the County. For instance, attracting businesses related to senior care. Currently, there are three nursing homes in the County, however there are few transitional housing options such as assisted living communities. Considering the fact that 31% of householders within the County are 65 years or older, additional senior care housing options are needed.

### **10.7.4 Tourism**

Tourism encompasses various business types such as: hotels, restaurants, gas stations, shops, museums, campgrounds and rental car agencies. These businesses are interdependent upon one another. Tourism and travel are among the leading industries according to the U.S. Census.

## TYPES OF TOURISM

Outdoor Recreation	Historic and Cultural Activities
Sightseeing	Hunting, Fishing, Wildlife Watching
Entertainment/ Spectator Sports	Retreat and Weekend Workshops
Community Events & Festivals	Personal Business
Business Conventions & Conference	Shopping
Visits by Relatives & Friends	Passing Through Communities

In Allegany County opportunities for the expansion of tourism exists. For instance, the linkages between the Wildlife Management Area, Dans Mountain State Park, and existing potential trails could promote eco-tourism. The expansion of hiking, biking, and other outdoor recreation areas would continue to promote the County and its natural features.

Allegany County possesses unique assets that enhance the chances of a thriving tourism industry. The County's mountains and forests provide opportunity for outdoor recreation and sightseeing. The remnants of the County's transportation heritage have left railroad beds for the Western Maryland Scenic Railroad and the Great Allegheny Passage (GAP). The C&O Canal has attracted cyclists for decades and is the setting of Canal Place. The National Road has become a linear tourism destination for travelers nationwide, and being the origin of the road really does make the Cumberland area its premier attraction. The area's former isolation and slower rate of growth have had the effect of preserving historic architecture that is an attraction for a sector of the tourism industry.

An indication of an area's tourism success is found in the performance of its lodging industry. The "Maryland Lodging Monitor", a product of the Maryland Office of Tourism, shows that in 2012, room demand in Allegany County grew at a rate of 3.1%, the fifth best among Maryland's counties and the City of Baltimore. The Western Region of the State out-performed all other regions with 7.1% growth in room demand while offering the lowest average room rate at \$78.85, statewide.

The County long ago realized the benefits of tourism and has supported festivals, museums and activities since the 1960's. Lately the County Commissioners have acted on more "big ticket" items by acquiring and managing the County Fairgrounds, supporting the scenic railroad and constructing and managing the Maryland portion of the GAP. The County Department of Tourism maintains a promotional presence in social media, including webpage, Facebook and smart phone "synching" and publishes an annual booklet "The Mountain Side of Maryland".

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### 10.7.4.1 Participation Rates and Economic Impact

The U.S. Census places tourism and travel among the nation's leading industries. Unlike other industries, tourism does not have an overt physical presence, yet the economic benefits of successful tourism enterprises may permeate the overall fiscal well-being of