

## CHAPTER 9 – COMMUNITY DESIGN

### Introduction

Historically, there were numerous small communities spread throughout Morgan County along the rivers and railroad. They were often marked by a Post Office, school and some commercial activity. Several remain on maps today although there is no community remaining in the traditional sense of the term. Economic forces continually drive the closing of small schools, Greenwood being the latest example, and the centralization of postal services again leading to closings of historic post offices like Unger.

The need to preserve some cultural memory of these communities can be addressed through Historic Preservation efforts aimed at particular structures or clusters of structures. “Downtown” Sleepy Creek village is an example with several historic houses and a church. Greenwood is a different template with the activities of community now focused on the South Morgan Fire Hall. There are no commercial activities in either of these locales.

These preservation efforts should first include an assessment of the more prominent features that make up the unique character of Morgan County’s various communities, and from that assessment provide direction for outlining measures that will support some legacy of the past pattern.

Currently, and for the foreseeable future, there are virtually no trends that indicate the revival of such traditional communities and certainly not ones that include any economic activity such as general stores. The creation of their 21<sup>st</sup> century versions produces a very different type of population center, one that requires planning guidelines.

The scale required for a 21<sup>st</sup> century community center was visible in the potential Coolfont development of the early 21<sup>st</sup> century that was proposed by the Freeman Company. A “perfect storm” of negative forces caused this potential to be unrealized and in 2016 the property was sold off in parcels that would guarantee such a plan would never re-emerge. It became evident that scale is crucial – hundreds of homes and a major commercial activity like a planned resort are essential to encourage and support the type of community activity once experienced throughout the county.

Today, we have other directions for community design:

- enhancing the remaining population centers;
- molding subdivisions into something reflecting a community concept; and
- encouraging development areas based on new technology and environmental principles.

The potential for enhancement of existing population centers will be detailed further in Chapters 10 and 11: Redevelopment and Renewal and Preferred Areas of Development respectively.

Currently, design criteria constitute a minimal regulatory issue in developing a subdivision. A commonality of design is generally the decision of either the developer or the individual

homeowner. However, community design principles that go beyond the look of housing or landscaping should be considered including designated common greenspace and pedestrian amenities.

Encouraging development areas based on environmental principles such as green stormwater technology, landscaping for heat and cold moderation as well as best use of water and construction of entire developments using solar energy or electric cars are entirely new directions. Another new design concept that could be considered, possibly as a redevelopment tool, is a community of “small” houses.

## **Communities**

There are several dominant communities outlined within this plan that make up much of the population base. These include the towns of Bath and Paw Paw, as well as unincorporated areas such as Great Cacapon.

### **Small Towns**

The most notable community center is the Berkeley Springs area which surrounds the historic Town of Bath and serves as the county seat. This area, which includes a large concentration of the total county population and a single postal address, is easily identified through several distinct community features. These features, which appear in both natural sites and architectural style, draw much of their attention from the tourism-driven industries of the famous natural warm spring spas and baths, historic inns, and small town shopping appeal as well as from governmental activities like the courthouse.

Considering the nature of this area as the cultural and political hub within the county, residential and commercial growth are projected to continue, especially along the US Rt. 522 corridor both north and south of the town proper in a type of “urban spawl” that alters its composition from historic tourism town to shopping center as it proceeds away from the central core. To preserve and promote the existing cultural character which makes this community a uniquely defined area, there is a need for commitment to a comprehensive approach by all stakeholders especially in the area of housing.

The second major area within the county defined as a community of distinct social and cultural activity is the town of Paw Paw. Unlike Bath, Paw Paw is not heavily surrounded by a larger urban area. While this provides the town a greater sense of place, it also imposes limitations especially on commercial activity. This sense of place comes through such features as a shared school campus for all grades, community-provided parks, libraries and local public safety services making it less dependent than other areas of the county on the Berkeley Springs area to provide public services. However, the lack of population growth in the town area and increased cost of many of these public services make it a challenge to consider how it can be maintained. This is already seen in the constant pressure to close Paw Paw High School and the new ambulance plan that would move that emergency service further east to Largent.

Paw Paw straddles WV 9 along the Potomac River at the southwestern edge of the county on the opposite side of Cacapon Mountain from Berkeley Springs. With proximity to some natural recreational amenities, it is much more rural in character than communities in the eastern sector of the county.

Paw Paw's singular position is underscored by its nearly equal distances from four urban areas in three states. Cumberland, MD and Berkeley Springs are approximately the same distance but Berkeley Springs is a smaller center and requires a trip over a mountainous area to reach. Many residents and businesses of Paw Paw are more accustomed to seeking opportunity and basic needs from the Cumberland area especially since historically – although not currently – Paw Paw was connected to Cumberland by railroad including passenger travel. Romney, WV is just a few miles farther than Berkeley Springs and Cumberland, requires no mountain crossing and shares a common state. The most prosperous and largest nearby area is Winchester, VA which is about 10 miles further than either Cumberland or Berkeley Springs. Without major housing development and the subsequent commercial activity to serve the additional population, it is a challenge to see a growth future for Paw Paw.

#### Unincorporated Areas

Great Cacapon is the largest unincorporated community in Morgan County which includes a surrounding population of more than 1,000 residents and businesses. Great Cacapon takes its name from the Cacapon River which empties into the Potomac River on the town's eastern fringe.

Great Cacapon has a long history with parcels of land that were originally surveyed by George Washington. It was once known as the Cacapon Depot on the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad mainline and draws much of its history from its location along the Potomac and Cacapon rivers as well as the railroad system. Its name was changed in 1876 to Great Cacapon to differentiate it from Little Cacapon which was also on the B & O mainline. Located four miles to the west of the Panorama Overlook on Cacapon Mountain, along WV9/Cacapon Road, it is sufficiently separated from Berkeley Springs by Cacapon Mountain to have established its own identity over time. Public sewer and water systems were developed in the 1990s mostly centralized in the small town center. Although there has been extensive population growth, especially in retirement and second homes along the Cacapon River and in surrounding countryside, commercial and community development have not proceeded apace. Like Paw Paw, it would take a significant addition of clustered housing and increased population to “grow” Great Cacapon.

Unger is a smaller unincorporated community located in southern Morgan County. It was distinguished among the other communities for retaining an operating post office since one was established in 1853. There was also a mill and a general store. From 1857 to 1935, it was known as Unger's Store until its name was shortened to Unger. Although the Post Office recently closed and the general store has reduced its activities, the community established in this area is experiencing population growth with new neighboring developments. The South Morgan Fire Company is to the north on Rte. 13. Like other former communities, there is no trend towards

establishing any commercial activity. It is located at the crossroads of Winchester Grade Road (CR 13) and Unger's Store Road (CR 11).

Largent is a unique community located along the Cacapon River. Originally called Hopyard and later Enon, its population increases on weekends and during summer months due to the hundreds of cabins and camps located in the hills around the river. Also located in Largent is the 120-year-old Enon Primitive Baptist Church where the Cacapon is still used for baptisms. There is currently a general store and a proposal to build an emergency services structure that may provide some basis for the establishment of a functioning community.

#### Other Historic Neighborhoods and Villages

The first three neighborhoods listed are now seamless parts of what people would consider Berkeley Springs although they are not within the town limits except for Greenway Cemetery which was recently annexed into the town although not the residential areas around it.

Berryville is a former independent community located south of downtown Berkeley Springs. It sprouted up along US Rt. 522 at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, first as a farming community and then as a residential extension of a growing Berkeley Springs. It remains outside the Bath town limits. Berryville includes Berkeley Springs High School, Widmyer Elementary School, and Greenway Cemetery.

Jimstown is another community located in close proximity to the Town of Bath corporate limits and generally considered a neighborhood of Berkeley Springs. The community is located just north of town.

Between the Town of Bath and Jimstown is the neighborhood of North Berkeley. Like Jimstown, North Berkeley does not lie within the limits of Bath, but it is generally considered a neighborhood of the town. The community includes the location of the Board of Education main offices. The area around the BOE facility and the adjacent park was recently annexed into Bath.

#### Rural Villages

Virtually all of these areas, some of which formerly had schools and post offices, are now indistinguishable from residential areas along the roadways. Their residents may refer to living in a specific area and often variations of the area name are found in subdivisions.

Omps is a small unincorporated community that lies along US Rt. 522. Omps previously had its own post office in operation between 1887 and 1973.

Ridersville is an unincorporated community between Berkeley Springs and Stohrs Crossroads along WV 9 on Pious Ridge where Pious Ridge Road (CR 4) and Peter Yost Road (CR 9/8) intersect with WV 9. Ridersville sprang up in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century as a small farming community along the Martinsburg Road with a general store. It had its own operating post office until it was closed in 1903 due to the community's close proximity to Berkeley Springs. During its period as

an independent agrarian town, it was known as Friendship, Rider Store, Riderville and finally as Ridersville. Today, it is merely a growing residential area of Berkeley Springs.

Rock Gap is a small community along Valley Road located between Omph to its south and Berkeley Springs to its north. Situated between Warm Springs Ridge (1,086 feet) to its west and Timber Ridge (1,355 feet) to its east, Rock Gap takes its name from the "Rock Gap" in Warm Springs Ridge, carved out by Rock Gap Run, a tributary stream of Sleepy Creek. Rock Gap began as a small farming community along Valley Road. It had a post office in operation from 1884 to 1907 and again between 1921 and 1925. Residents of Rock Gap currently have a Berkeley Springs address. Rock Gap is the site of the old Mount Garfield School and Mount Tabor Church.

Sir Johns Run is an unincorporated community at the mouth of Sir Johns Run on the Potomac River northwest of Berkeley Springs. It is bound to its west by the Widmeyer Wildlife Management Area and to its east by Warm Springs Ridge (1,086 feet). While Sir Johns Run was once an operating station on the old B & O mainline as an early passenger station for Berkeley Springs, it is primarily a residential community of Berkeley Springs accessible by Sir Johns Run Road (County Route 3). Sir Johns Run had its own post office in operation from 1850 to 1938. Today, the stream and its namesake confluence with the Potomac River are a site on the Washington Heritage Trail.

Cherry Run is a small village located along the B & O mainline on the Potomac River. The community is named for the stream, Cherry Run, that meets the Potomac in its vicinity. It was originally known as Cherry Run Depot because of the important interchange between the B&O and the Western Maryland Railroad there. Across the Potomac from Cherry Run lies Big Pool on the C & O Canal. Cherry Run is reached by Householder Road (CR 10) from the west and both Cherry Run Road (CR 5) and Fulton Road (CR 1/5) from Martinsburg Road (WV 9) to the south. On the B & O mainline, Cherry Run is located between Hancock to its west and Little Georgetown in Berkeley County to its east.

Doe Gully is an older community along the Potomac River located along the old B & O Railroad where it bisects a bend in the Potomac by way of the Randolph Tunnel. Doe Gully is only accessible by way of Doe Gully Lane (CR 8/2) from Orleans Road (CR 18/1). It is located southwest of Orleans Cross Roads. The C & O Canal National Park crosses the Potomac River onto the West Virginia side to Doe Gully's west and it also lies directly across the river from it.

Hancock (WV) is located off of US 522 on River Road (CR 1) along the Potomac River north of Berkeley Springs. Originally known as Brosius, its post office's name was changed to Hancock in 1948 to reflect its location on the B & O mainline across the river from Hancock, Maryland. Located along River Road from US 522, Hancock is also accessible by way of Fairview Drive (CR 2) from Berkeley Springs and also Pious Ridge Road (CR 4) from Ridersville on WV 9. Today it is distinguished as the location of a railway structure and the Potomac Airpark.

Hansrote is a small village located along the old B & O mainline on the Potomac River. Hansrote is northeast of Magnolia and southwest of Doe Gully. Stuart Tunnel connected Hansrote with

Magnolia by railroad, but today Hansrote is accessible by way of Hansrote Road (CR12/2) from Magnolia Road (CR 12).

Holton is a small community in northeastern Morgan County, located on Martinsburg Road (WV 9) at its junction with Cherry Run Road (CR 5) along Cherry Run and the Berkeley County line. Holton had its own post office in operation between 1889 and 1903.

Johnson's Mill is an unincorporated area in eastern Morgan County on Johnson's Mill Road (CR 26). It is centrally located between three other small rural villages along Sleepy Creek and is named for the "Johnson's Mill" that once operated here. Smith Crossroads on Winchester Grade Road (CR 13) is to its west by way of Autumn Acres Road (CR 26), New Hope is to its north by way of Spohr's Road (CR 8), and Duckwall is located to its east on Johnson's Mill Road along the western flanks of Sleepy Creek Mountain.

Magnolia is located northeast of Paw Paw along the Potomac River and the B & O mainline and east of where the Western Maryland Railroad right-of-way crosses the Potomac, bypassing a series of bends in the river. As a depot and water station on the B & O, Magnolia has been known by a number of names including Magnolia Dale, Magnolia Vale, and sometimes as Water Station Number 12 on the railroad. The community had its own school, Magnolia School, until it was closed in 1952, in favor of sending students from the Magnolia area to attend the schools in Paw Paw. Magnolia also had its own post office in operation from 1867 to 1868 as Magnolia Vale, and then again in 1871 to 1943 as Magnolia, when it was closed and the residents of Magnolia were assigned Paw Paw addresses. Magnolia can be accessed by way of Magnolia Road (CR 12). It is located between Paw Paw to the southwest and Jerome to the northwest.

Oakland is an unincorporated community located along Virginia Line Road (CR 8) north of Unger and south of Stotlers Crossroads. Oakland is connected to Valley Road (US 522) by Oakland and Morton Grove Roads (CR 26). Oakland sprouted up as a small farming community in the 19th century and established the second post office in Morgan County as well as a school which were both in operation until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Oakland United Methodist Church was the oldest continuous congregation in Morgan County until it merged with Greenwood United Methodist Church.

Orleans Cross Roads lies on the western flanks of Sideling Hill. To its south, Rockwell Run, a mountain stream fed by springs, empties into the Potomac. Orleans Cross Roads lies along the old B & O Railroad directly across the river from Little Orleans. It is accessible by way of Orleans Road (CR 18/1) from Cacapon Road (WV 9) via Detour Road (CR 18). Once the site of a functioning station on the B & O, Orleans Cross Roads also had its own operating post office. The community and post office were often known as Orleans Cross Roads or Orleans Crossroads while its station was known as Orleans Road Station. It is the site of the historic Orleans Cross Roads Methodist Episcopal Church, built in the 1850s.

Sleepy Creek is a small community on the Potomac River, at the mouth of Sleepy Creek. By 1860, Sleepy Creek had a post office and functioned as an important station on the B & O Railroad. Sleepy Creek is located along River Road (CR 1) east of Hancock and is accessible from Cherry Run to its east by way of Householder Road (CR 10).

Stohrs Crossroads is located along Martinsburg Road (WV 9) to the west of Sleepy Creek. Originally named Spohrs Cross Roads for the Spohr family, its name was eventually changed over the 19<sup>th</sup> century to "Stohrs". Stohrs "Crossroads" is formed by Martinsburg Road's intersection with the Potomac-Virginia Line Road (CR 8). North of Stohrs Crossroads, CR 8 is known as Potomac Road and south of the crossroads, it is known as Spohr's Road. It reaches the Virginia state line at Unger where it is known as Virginia Line Road.

Stotler's Crossroads is a small community in southeastern Morgan County, situated along Winchester Grade Road (CR 13) between the South and Middle Forks of Sleepy Creek on the eastern flanks of Highland Ridge (942 feet). A post office was established here in 1885 and took the name of the Stotler family, a prevalent family in the immediate area. Stotler's Crossroads is the home to several historic sites including the Mount Olivet United Methodist Church (1888) and Ambrose Chapel, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Stotler's Crossroads is at a junction of Winchester Grade Road (CR 13) with the Virginia Line and Highland Ridge Roads (CR 8).

Woodrow lies south of Paw Paw along WV 9 in both Hampshire and Morgan Counties. Woodrow lies on the eastern flanks of Spring Gap Mountain with Sideling Hill to its east. Woodrow Union Church has served the community since the late 19th Century.

Woodmont is a small community on the Potomac River located immediately to the west of the community of Great Cacapon.

Several other small neighborhoods and crossroads include Duckwall, located in Sleepy Creek just east of Johnson's Mill, Greenwood in southeastern Morgan County, Mount Trimble situated around the crossroads at Michael's Chapel near the confluence of Sleepy Creek and Meadow Branch, New Hope located at the confluence of Yellow Spring Run and Sleepy Creek, Redrock Crossing located on River Road (CR 1) between the communities of Hancock and Sleepy Creek, and Smith Crossroads at the crossroads of the Winchester Grade Road (CR 13) and CR 26 and 13/1.

### Seasonal Home Clusters

Largent lies partly in Hampshire County and is located on the Cacapon River, about 18 miles southwest of Berkeley Springs along Cacapon Road (WV 9). Its post office was in operation from 1906 until the 1950s. Residences and businesses in Largent are currently serviced by Paw Paw's post office, therefore, bear Paw Paw addresses.

Lineburg is an unincorporated area located on the western flanks of Sideling Hill on the Turkey Foot Bend of the Potomac River. The community originally served as a station on the B & O Railroad, but has since become a location for vacationing weekenders from the Washington, D.C. area.

There are several “new” communities that are large subdivisions often populated originally by second-home owners that have evolved into permanent residences for retirees or resale for permanent residences. These include Cacapon South and Cacapon East along US 522 near Cacapon State Park and the Coolfont Mountainside developed as part of the Coolfont Resort beginning in the late 1960s. Cacapon South has a type of central sewer where individual septic tanks empty into a communal treatment system. Coolfont Mountainside has both self-contained community water and sewer systems. On the western side of the county, River Ridge may fit into this category although it does not have central water or sewer systems.

As with most contemporary subdivisions of whatever size, common design features – if they exist at all – are regulated by the specific homeowners’ association as well as by owner choice.

### Vacated Communities

Green Ridge is now an uninhabited railroad community located along the old B & O mainline where the Western Maryland Railroad crossed the Potomac River from the Stickpike Tunnel in Maryland. Green Ridge was originally known as Baird and was an operating station on the B & O. Today, it is located within the C & O National Park. A stretch of the Western Maryland's right-of-way from Green Ridge to Jerome is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Green Ridge is accessible by way of Baird Lane (CR 12/3) from Hansrote Road (CR 12/2) at Hansrote. It can also be reached by a number of residential roads in the Nixon Tracts development on Magnolia Ridge from Magnolia to the south.

Jerome is an uninhabited community along the old B & O mainline on the Potomac River. Jerome is also the site of a stretch of the Western Maryland Railroad right-of-way from milepost 126 to milepost 160 listed on the National Register. At Jerome, the train-order office was in use until it was closed on September 1, 1959. When it was abandoned by the Chessie System in May 1975, the office was not torn down and is one of the few buildings that remain today in Jerome. There was also an operating connection with the B & O low line at milepost 137 but it was later removed when the B & O abandoned the lowline in 1961. The community and its station on the railroad are rumored to have been named for Jerome Boneparte.

### Significant Features

Not all unique design trends can be found in roughly structured community centers and in some cases they may exist as a grouping along waterways, single estates of some grandeur, or even publicly owned properties that offer features integral to the character of the community.

### Community Themes

The Washington Heritage Trail, developed in 1998, includes a tour of the many locations throughout Morgan County which are associated with the rich historical link it shares with George Washington. This includes at least 15 points of interest within the county, from the town of Paw Paw to Spruce Pine Hollow Park in the east. These points of interest serve as significant community focal features for the area in which they are located. Just as much of the growth



within the county has occurred along US Rt. 522 and WV Rt. 9, the trail follows closely along these routes accentuating the collective historic or natural importance each site shares in contributing to the identity of these areas.

Numerous communities sprouted up along the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal and Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. Both being located along the Potomac River during different periods in time fueled the existence of several historic communities that have established identities lasting well beyond the existence of either transportation system. Much of the C & O route parallels the Potomac River across from Morgan County on the Maryland side while the B & O route ran more on the Morgan County side. Since their abandonment, only remnants of the communities remain. Instead, recreational opportunities have been created along the Canal and the Potomac River, which provide value to preserving the pristine character of this area.

Other communities grew up around crossroads on old roads as well as around local schools and/or post offices (see list above). Virtually none had any other distinguishing design feature that identified them as a community beyond location and these public facilities. Most of these are no longer distinguishable as separate areas.

### Significant Sites

By far the largest single industrial site in Morgan County, US Silica, which has changed names and ownership over its decades of existence, has had a profound affect on the employment and development of the Berkeley Springs area as a county hub. This property consists of more than 2,800 acres owned by a single entity and utilized for its major mining operations of Oriskany sand. However, as this natural mineral resource is depleted, it is expected that the company may have only approximately 20 years of mining productivity remaining. Given the location and importance of this industry within Morgan County, future use of this property must be taken into account in order to ensure that whatever reuse may evolve from this transition it is complimentary to the surrounding community.

The Ridge Fish Hatchery is only one of seven in the State, producing both cold and warm water fish including trout and muskies. The Hatchery is owned and operated by the West Virginia Department of Natural Resources and has been in existence since 1929. It is located about 12 miles south of Berkeley Springs on US Rt. 522 and is fed by the Breakneck Run Springs.

The 6000-acre Cacapon Resort State Park provides a nexus for development in the surrounding area. It is easily accessed by US 522 about 10 miles south of Berkeley Springs. It is a site on the Washington Heritage Trail.

Coolfont Manor House is one of the few structures outside the Town of Bath listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It is also a site on the Washington Heritage Trail. In 1756, a British veteran of General Edward Braddock's defeat during the French and Indian War built a cabin near cool springs in the Sir John's Run Valley along the eastern slope of Cacapon Mountain. More than 150 years later, prolific author, ecologist and presidential appointee, Herbert Quick, chose the same site to live out his "back-to-the-farm" philosophy. In 1910, Quick built the stately Manor House, pond and several outbuildings as the centerpiece of his

experimental farm. He called it Coolfont in honor of the springs. It served as residence for the owner of Coolfont Resort from the mid-1960s through the sale of the resort in 2006. It is currently uninhabited.

## **Goals and Objectives**

### **Goals**

The “identity” of a community is shaped by its design. The proximity and integration of neighborhoods, shopping, and recreational and cultural activities will determine the extent to which a sense of community evolves. To support the growth of real communities, the following goals are offered:

- Encouraging the formation of pedestrian-friendly rural village centers amid residential development and subdivisions to serve as hubs for community life, reduce the need for auto travel and keep consumer dollars in the local economy;
- Encouraging consideration of design principles that are environmentally friendly and sustainable;
- Supporting the enforcement of meaningful building codes to protect the health, safety and welfare of citizens and businesses; and
- Enabling multi-generational community wide activities that involve significant and diverse segments of the population.

### **Objectives**

These objectives will ensure progress in accomplishing the community design goals:

- Discouraging the proliferation of strip-mall style commercial centers that create traffic congestion and sprawl;
- Encouraging centralized and improved communication with the public about local amenities and activities;
- Encouraging cluster housing development with provision of expansive green space and walking areas;
- Encouraging lower costs for utilities and preserving natural resources including water; and
- Supporting development of commercial activities in existing town centers and Great Cacapon.