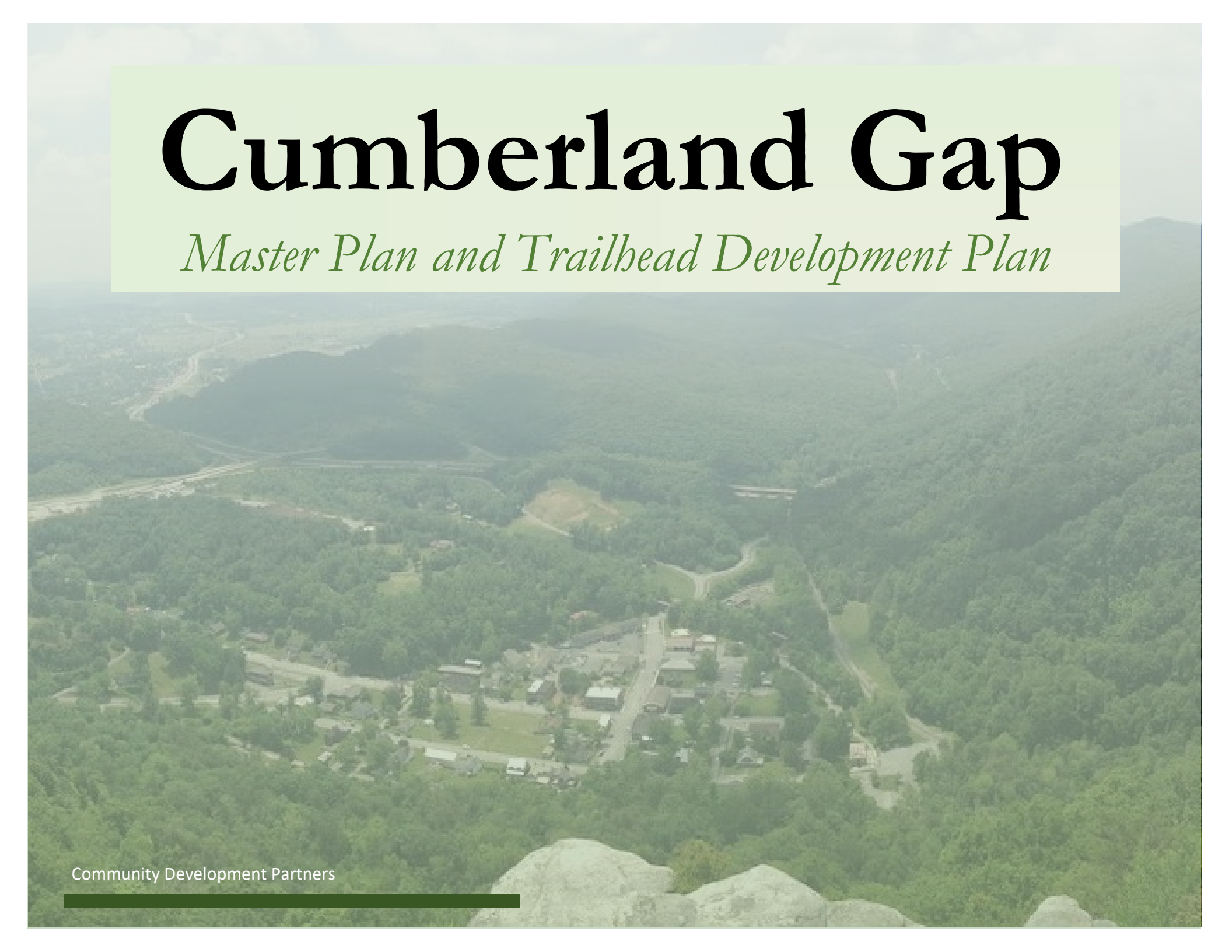


# Cumberland Gap

*Master Plan and Trailhead Development Plan*

Community Development Partners

An aerial photograph of a lush, green valley. In the center, a small town or village is visible, surrounded by dense forest. A river or stream flows through the valley, and a road winds through the landscape. The foreground shows large, light-colored rocks, suggesting the viewer is looking down from a high vantage point. The sky is overcast and hazy.



A RESOLUTION TO ADOPT THE  
CUMBERLAND GAP MASTER PLAN AND TRAILHEAD PLAN

WHEREAS, the Town of Cumberland Gap was awarded a 2018 Access to Health through Healthy Active Built Environments Grant to fund a master plan process; and

WHEREAS, in compliance with pertinent State regulations, Cumberland Gap solicited and evaluated statements of qualifications of interested professional firms for developing the master plan; and

WHEREAS, the Cumberland Gap Mayor and Board of Aldermen contracted the services of Community Development Partners, LLC to assist the Town with the development of the Master Plan; and

WHEREAS, the public was afforded several opportunities to provide input into the planning process including community-wide surveys, listening sessions, and two public input workshops; and

WHEREAS, a Draft Plan Presentation was held at Cumberland Gap Town Hall; and


WHEREAS, the Mayor and Aldermen have reviewed and provided input and assistance with development of the Master Plan;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Cumberland Gap Mayor and Board of Aldermen as follows,

THAT, the Cumberland Gap Mayor and Board of Aldermen does hereby adopt the Cumberland Gap Master Plan and Trailhead Development Plan.

READ AND ADOPTED this 7<sup>th</sup> day of October, 2019.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Neal Pucciarelli, Mayor

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Attest: Linda Moyers, Recorder



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## COMMON ACRONYMS

ADA – Americans with Disabilities Act

ARC – Appalachian Regional Commission

ALLM – Abraham Lincoln Library and Museum

CDBG – Community Development Block Grant

CDC – Centers for Disease Control

CGNHP – Cumberland Gap National Historical Park

DCOM – DeBusk College of Osteopathic Medicine

GET – Great Eastern Trail

EDA – Economic Development Administration

LMU – Lincoln Memorial University

TDEC – Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation

TDOT – Tennessee Department of Transportation

TNDOH – Tennessee Department of Health

TNECD – Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development

USDA – United States Department of Agriculture

USRDA –United States Rural Development Administration



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Town of Cumberland Gap is at a historic crossroads where three State lines meet, several significant trails come together and is a confluence for many pivotal historical events and movements. The town's special events highlight and connect cultural traditions in east Tennessee, and its rich literary history and historic charm.

Cumberland Gap is located in northern Claiborne County, which has been recognized by the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development (TNECD) as a highly distressed county with higher than average unemployment and poverty rates. The county is challenged with several social and economic factors affecting public health such as high rates of childhood poverty and heart disease, lack of healthy food access, and some of the highest healthcare costs in the state.

However, in recent years, several ongoing developments are presenting new opportunities for Cumberland Gap and the region. The recent expansion of LMU's graduate and professional programs at their campus adjacent to Cumberland Gap have resulted in an influx in Cumberland Gap's population. Notable statewide and national trails are in development that will pass right through Cumberland Gap. The Cumberland Trail, beginning in the Tennessee River Gorge will have its northern trailhead in the town. The Cumberland Trail is also a recognized segment of the Great Eastern Trail, which will provide a continuous foot path all the way from Alabama to New York. Other trails developed over recent years in the area include the popular Cumberland Gap to Harrogate greenway, as well as a "blueway" river trail on the nearby Powell River, which hosts notable events throughout the year. These trail developments and the recent expansion of LMU present new opportunities for developing an outdoor recreation economy in the area.

In 2018, the Town of Cumberland Gap received an Access to Health through Healthy Active Built Environments Grant from the Tennessee Department of Health (INDOH) to fund a Cumberland Gap Master planning effort. The goal was to generate a plan that guides Cumberland Gap in prioritizing future needs, carrying out program improvements, and identifying financing strategies to enhance access to healthy active living opportunities.

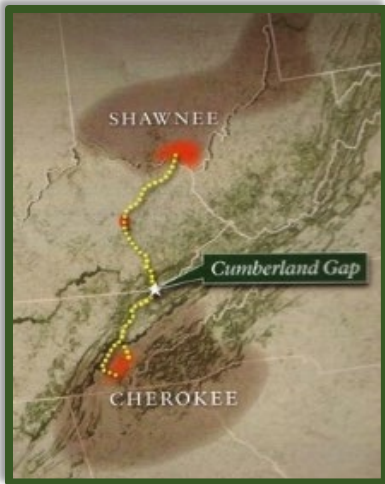
The Plan includes a detailed evaluation of the existing opportunities, strengths, and assets in the community. It also involved an extensive public process, including a community-wide survey, several listening and visioning sessions held in conjunction with local meetings and events, two public workshops where the community provided additional input, and interviews with stakeholders, business owners, and local government staff. The process also included visits with stakeholders from Cumberland Gap to a series of "mentor" communities to learn best practices. The communities that were visited shared common challenges, opportunities or other characteristics with Cumberland Gap and have been recognized for their success at using their natural and historic assets to further their economic development and support public health.

Ultimately, the evaluation of existing opportunities, input provided by stakeholders and the public, and best practices provided by the mentor communities provided a framework for recommended facilities, policies, and initiatives, as well as resources and concrete next steps to support public health and the local economy of Cumberland Gap and northern Claiborne County.

## THE HISTORIC TOWN OF CUMBERLAND GAP

The Town of Cumberland Gap is a historic southern town with a valuable history and heritage. The Town has long been recognized for its significance at the crossroads of State lines and as the first community on the Tennessee side of the Cumberland Mountain range.

The Town was incorporated in 1907, but its history traces much earlier. The natural saddle formed in the Cumberland Mountains just north of the Town has made the Gap a regular passage through the Cumberland Mountains for both wildlife and humans alike. The importance of this passage is celebrated through the Town's very namesake.



Warriors Path, National Park Service

For centuries, the Shawnee and Cherokee tribes traveled along the Warriors Path that ran through the Cumberland Gap and provided access to the fertile hunting grounds in the river valleys of Tennessee and Kentucky. Due to its strategic location, many battles and skirmishes were fought between these tribes to control access to the trail and hunting grounds<sup>1</sup>.

As European settlers pushed westward in search of new opportunity, the area was explored by the iconic frontiersman Daniel Boone. When news of the passageway spread, traveling

<sup>1</sup> [www.nps.gov/cuga/learn/historyculture/warriors-path.htm](http://www.nps.gov/cuga/learn/historyculture/warriors-path.htm), accessed 12/21/2018

through the Gap became the most common route for immigrants, with an estimated 300,000 traveling through the passage by 1800<sup>2</sup>.

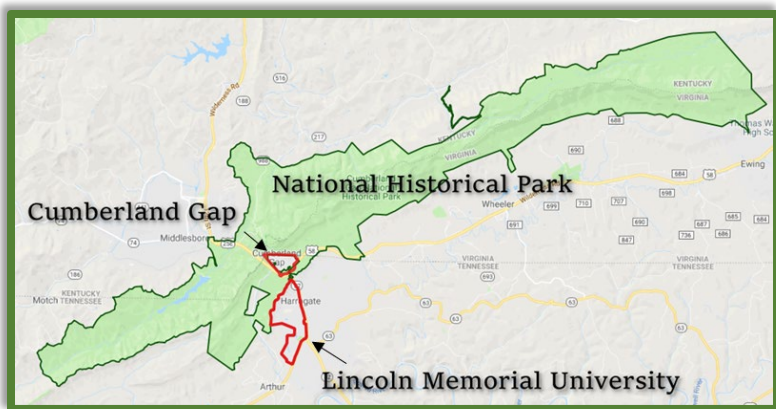
Later, the passage through the mountains played a pivotal role in the Civil War. Recognizing the strategic importance of the Gap for control of the railroads and flow of goods between Kentucky, Tennessee and Virginia, several battles were fought in the region, and control of the Gap passed hands between the Union and Confederate forces several times. The Civil War history and its impacts on the region have been celebrated throughout the years, with reenactments in the Historical Park and the Town itself on a reoccurring basis drawing in visitors from across the U.S. The Civil War reenactments held in Cumberland Gap have been given wide recognition for their ability to draw in reenactors and visitors of all ages to consider the historical significance of the Town and region. In fact, communities across the State – including much larger cities – have reached out to Cumberland Gap for guidance on successful historical reenactments.



Civil War Reenactors in Cumberland Gap, Tennessee

<sup>2</sup> Lockett, William W. (1964), *Cumberland Gap National Historical Park*, Tennessee Historical Quarterly, Vol. XXIII, No.4

Cumberland Gap has also played a significant cultural role, not only in the area, but also in the state and nation as a whole. Lincoln Memorial University graduated several well-known writers and poets, including James Still, Jesse Stuart, and Don West, whose writings and political activity had a significant impact on major social and civil rights movements and influenced Appalachian literature as we know it today<sup>3</sup>. With this heritage in mind, the Mountain Heritage Literary Festival, founded by acclaimed author Silas House, draws notable writers to the Cumberland Gap region every year to share ideas and present their latest works. Through the Arts in the Gap, LMU provides art programs in downtown Cumberland Gap, as well as year-round public access to art exhibits and numerous community events such as an annual theatre dinner at the Paul V. Hamilton Center for the Arts. Mountain Fiesta, another event organized by students and faculty of LMU, provides a significant opportunity for celebrating Latin American and Appalachian cultures and has quickly grown to one of the most well attended public events in the region. The Arts Co-



<sup>3</sup> Gifford, James M. & Kazee, Erin R. "Jesse Stuart and Don West." *Appalachian Heritage*, vol. 36 no. 4, 2008, pp. 31-37. Project MUSE

<sup>4</sup> [www.bls.gov/lau](http://www.bls.gov/lau)

op located in the heart of Downtown Cumberland Gap celebrates the art works of many local and regional residents. The Co-op also provides regular programmed arts and craft activities for both children and adults and provides a venue for selling fine arts and crafts produced by artists in the town and region.

The rich historic and cultural background of Cumberland Gap has provided the town with a quality of life for residents and an indelible draw for visitors. The importance of these historic and cultural assets was made evident by the community through their first-hand input provided throughout this plan.

## COMMUNITY NEED

The town of Cumberland Gap is located in Claiborne County, a Tier 4 County as designated by the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development (TNECD). Counties designated Tier 4 have been recognized as highly distressed counties with higher than average unemployment and poverty rates, and lower market income rates. Median household incomes in Claiborne County remain some of the lowest in the State, and Claiborne County ranks 80<sup>th</sup> out of the State's 95 Counties for the portion of children who live in poverty<sup>4</sup>.

Social and economic conditions such as these can create barriers to accessing healthy food, or opportunities for healthy active living. These barriers can have a tremendous impact on public health. In fact, social, economic, and physical conditions have been found to have a much greater impact on health than the availability of clinical care<sup>5</sup>. In Claiborne County, heart disease is the most common cause of death. The county ranks 75<sup>th</sup> overall for

<sup>5</sup> Rudolph, L., Caplan, J., Ben-Moshe, K., & Dillon, L. (2013). *Health in All Policies: A Guide for State and Local Governments*



prevalence of heart disease related deaths across the State's 95 counties<sup>6</sup>. Common risk factors for heart disease include smoking, high cholesterol and blood pressure, diabetes, stress, and obesity<sup>7</sup>. Food insecurity and lack of access to healthy foods also pose challenges in Claiborne County, which ranks 81<sup>st</sup> among the State's 95 counties for these factors. These health factors in Claiborne County are exacerbated by the fact that health care costs are some of the most expensive in the state, ranking 83<sup>rd</sup> out of the State's 95 counties<sup>8</sup>.

### Ranking Health Risks in Claiborne County (out of 95 TN Counties)

- Childhood Poverty – 80<sup>th</sup>
- Heart Disease – 75<sup>th</sup>
- Healthy Food Access – 81<sup>st</sup>
- Healthcare Cost – 83<sup>rd</sup>

Evaluating public health and the local economy in Cumberland Gap necessitates discussion of State Route 25E, the Cumberland Gap Tunnel, and their impact on tourism and local businesses.

Historically, U.S. Route 25E ran east-west between Kentucky and Tennessee by passing over the Cumberland Gap saddle on the Virginia/Kentucky border, and through the town of Cumberland Gap. As the first town on the Tennessee side of the Cumberland mountain range, Cumberland Gap served as both an entrance to the Park, and a popular place to stop to refuel, dine, and obtain other amenities and services. The Town has preserved much of its

19<sup>th</sup> century architecture and was declared a Historic District on the National Register of Historic Places in 1990. Due to its location and historic charm, Cumberland Gap was popular as both a destination and stopping point for those journeying through.

Many tour buses traveling to and from the north and south also stopped in Cumberland Gap, providing a boost to the local economy. In 1996, the Cumberland Gap Tunnel opened, rerouting 25E. The opening of the Tunnel had a major impact on tourism and the local economy in Cumberland Gap by bypassing the town's downtown businesses. According to former Cumberland Gap Business Association president, John Ravnum,



Cumberland Gap Tunnel on U.S. Route 25E

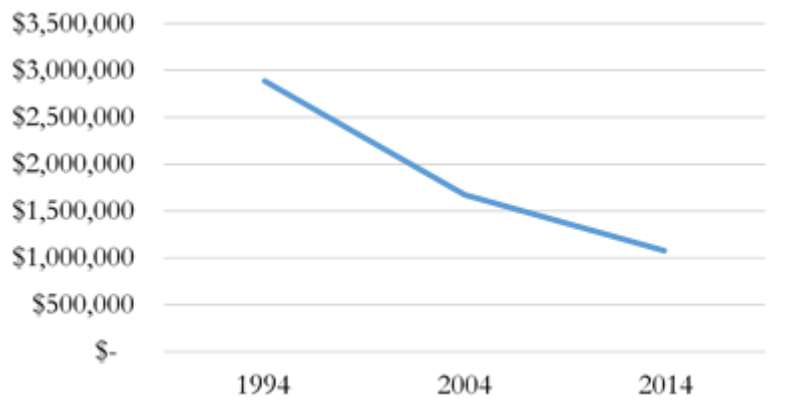
<sup>6</sup> <https://nccd.cdc.gov>, 1/31/2018

<sup>7</sup> [www.cdc.gov/heartdisease/facts.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/heartdisease/facts.htm)

<sup>8</sup> [www.countyhealthrankings.org](http://www.countyhealthrankings.org), 10/20/2018

“[the] tunnel has caused the most negative economic impact to Claiborne County since the War Between the States”<sup>9</sup>.

As evidence of this impact, annual payrolls for businesses in Cumberland Gap decreased over 40% between 1994 (just before the tunnel opened) and 2004. The total number of establishments providing employment opportunities in the Gap decreased similarly over this period. This downward trend continued through 2014.<sup>10</sup>



Annual Payroll from Local Businesses, 1994 - 2014

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Although Cumberland Gap and northern Claiborne County face several challenges regarding their economy and public health, the area’s wealth of assets put them in a position to pursue economic development opportunities and public health related

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<sup>9</sup> National Parks and Conservation Association. “Come on Down Town Invites”. *National Parks*, May/June 1999, A-2

improvements. The region is at the crossroads of three nationally significant trails: the Cumberland Trail, the Daniel Boone Trail, and the Wilderness Road Trail. Cumberland Gap has also developed close ties with nearby Lincoln Memorial University (LMU) and with the Cumberland Gap National Historical Park CGNHP, one of the Country’s most visited National Parks. The relationship between these entities puts the Town in an ideal position to embark on a collaborative planning effort to improve the economy and public health in the region utilizing their wealth of natural and physical assets.


Cumberland Gap is at the crossroads of three major trails:

- Cumberland Trail
- Daniel Boone Trail
- Wilderness Road Trail

#### **WHAT IS THE CUMBERLAND GAP MASTER PLAN?**

In 2018, the Town of Cumberland Gap received an Access to Health through Healthy Active Built Environments Grant from the Tennessee Department of Health (TDOH) to fund a Cumberland Gap Master planning effort. The Town of Cumberland Gap contracted the professional services of Community Development Partners, LLC, in association with Brown, Pearman, Russell, LLC to facilitate public outreach and develop the Master Plan.

<sup>10</sup> County Business Patterns, [www.census.gov/programs-surveys/cbp/data/datasets.html](http://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/cbp/data/datasets.html), retrieved 11/6/2018



The goal of the Master Plan, as set forth in collaboration with the funding agency, is to develop a vision and priorities for facilities, policies, and initiatives that support public health and the local economy of Cumberland Gap and northern Claiborne County. To reach this goal, the following specific objectives were pursued:

- Develop consensus around a vision and goals for the community.
- Generate an inventory of local resources and assets.
- Engage a diverse range of partners and stakeholders and ensure the project incorporates multiple perspectives and provides multiple benefits, including those that support public health for underserved populations in northern Claiborne County.
- Make key recommendations to improve safety, access, and design of non-motorized facilities and trail access in Cumberland Gap and northern Claiborne County.
- Understand how population, demographic, and economic changes over the next 10 years may impact Cumberland Gap and the ability of local communities to access healthy food, safe housing and an active lifestyle.
- Develop priorities, strategies, and conceptual designs for structural or procedural improvements to Cumberland Gap for the next 10-years that support public health and the local economy.

To achieve these objectives, existing facilities within Cumberland Gap were evaluated to assess safety, access, and design for active living. Forecasts were developed to understand how population, demographic, and economic changes over the next 10 years may impact the relationships between Cumberland Gap and the surrounding trail system and other natural amenities. A community

assessment was conducted to gain input from residents regarding their vision for Downtown. Finally, based on the evaluation, forecast, and input gathered from the community, the plan generated priorities and strategies for implementing improvements in Cumberland Gap over the next 10 years.

The goal of the Master Plan is to develop a vision and priorities for facilities, policies, and initiatives that support public health and the local economy of Cumberland Gap and northern Claiborne County.

#### **How Will the Plan Be Used?**

The Cumberland Gap Master Plan will be used to promote the community and guide decision making at the local level for issues such as funding and facility design. The Plan identifies and documents key assets and strengths that can be used to promote the community to potential businesses, visitors, and residents. With a focus on equity and sustainability, recommendation in the Plan provide a path to implementation that is responsive to the community's greatest needs, provides concrete and realistic improvements based on best practices, and supports long-term active recreation opportunities and healthy life choices in the region. Key aspects of public health that the plan will address include trail access and non-motorized connectivity, healthy food access opportunities, lodging and housing opportunities and conceptual designs for underutilized properties in Cumberland Gap.

The Plan will also provide a basis for pursuing future grants and other funding opportunities.

## Plan Consistency

There is a long history of planning in the Cumberland Gap region. Most recently, the Appalachian Gateway Communities Initiative: An Assessment and Recommendations Report for Natural and Cultural Heritage Tourism Development in the Cumberland Gap Region (“Gateway Communities Initiative”) was developed by the National Trust for Historic Preservation and The Conservation Fund in July, 2009 and the Claiborne County Regional 10-Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan was completed in February, 2018.

The Gateway Communities Initiative provided overarching opportunities, challenges, and recommendations for developing sustainable and locally consistent tourism opportunities in the Cumberland Gap region. Among the Gateway Communities Initiative recommendations were the following:

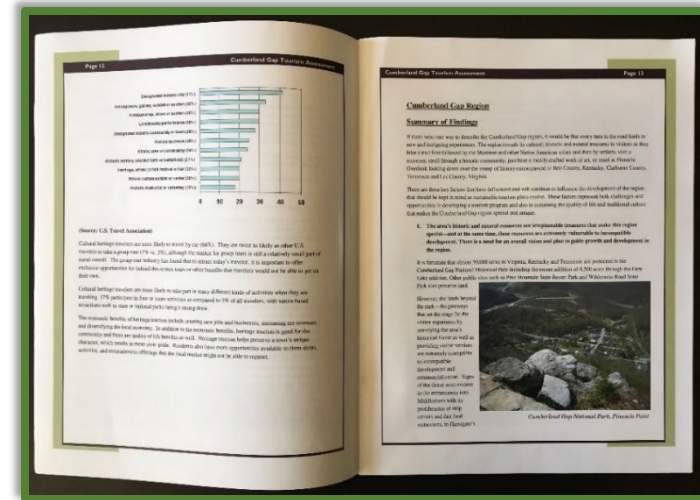
- Create a detailed inventory of existing opportunities and assets in Cumberland Gap
- Generate design guidelines for underdeveloped properties in the Gap
- Develop a series of trails to thematically link activities and sites
- Produce maps and narratives that highlight the three-county region and its key amenities
- Increase opportunities for bicycle transportation
- Investigate new opportunities for housing and lodging
- Plan for new facilities that are compatible with sustainability of region
- Determine uses for empty lots on Colwyn and Pennlyn
- Tell the story of Cumberland Gap

The Claiborne County 10-Year Regional Parks and Recreation Master Plan provided priorities and guidance for the development, operations and maintenance of parks and recreational assets, essential to the well-being of countywide resident.

Among the Parks and Recreation Master Plan’s recommendations were the following:

- Pursue Trail Town Identity for Cumberland Gap
- Pursue non-motorized connectivity throughout the Town of Cumberland Gap
- Extend existing trails in northern Claiborne County

By focusing on key assets, issues, and design guidelines that promote active and healthy lifestyles in the Town of Cumberland Gap, this Master Plan supports and implements several of these recommendations from both the Gateway Communities Initiative and the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.



Appalachian Gateway Communities Initiative (2009)

## Project Area

This Master Plan is focused on improving public health and the local economy in the Town of Cumberland Gap and surrounding areas in northern Claiborne County. Cumberland Gap is a distinct area with unique challenges and opportunities. The Town is located in northern Claiborne County and in a central location in both the 10-county Cumberland Gap region<sup>11</sup> and tri-state region.

Many of the resources, assets, challenges and opportunities present in Cumberland Gap are shared in common with these surrounding regions. For example, employment opportunities for residents of the Town are dispersed regionally, and the Cumberland Gap National Historical Park surrounding the Town provides one of the most visited attractions in the region. Throughout the analysis that follows, resources and conditions are analyzed for Cumberland Gap as well as the 10-county and tri-state regions.

### Cumberland Gap

- Population: 489 (2017) Area: 0.3 sq. miles

### Claiborne County

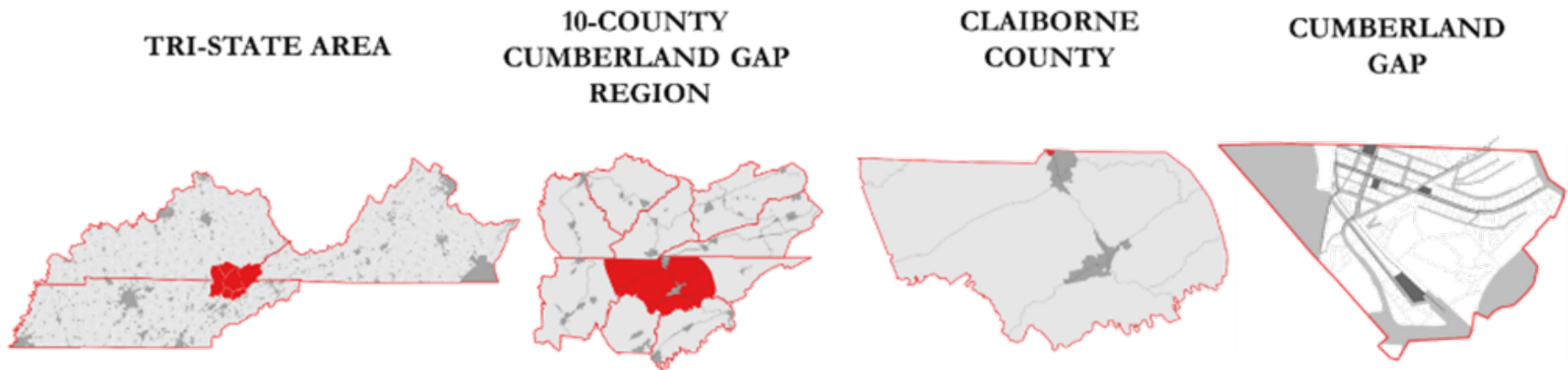
- Population: 31,609 (2017) Area: 442 sq. miles

### 10-County Cumberland Gap Region

- Population: 265,249 (2017) Area: 3,811 sq. miles

### Tri-State Area

- Population: 19,387,709 (2017) Area: 125,327 sq. miles



Cumberland Gap and regional context

<sup>11</sup> As identified by the Cumberland Gap Region Tourism Association (<http://www.cumberlandgapregion.com>)

## CUMBERLAND GAP TODAY

### Demographic and Economic Trends

Demographic and economic conditions can have a significant impact on land uses, public health, and quality of life in an area. For example, in Cumberland Gap, the population overall has become significantly younger over the last ten years, which may create more demand for affordable starter homes, entry level professional employment, and new entertainment opportunities. The following summary illustrates demographic and economic trends for Cumberland Gap as compared with trends seen in the ten-County Cumberland Gap Region and tri-state area as a whole.

### **Population**

The estimated population of Cumberland Gap in 2017 was 489 citizens. The estimated population of Cumberland Gap has grown at a much faster rate (14% per year) than the average growth rate in the ten-county region (0%) and the three-state region (1%) over the past 10 years. Much of this growth has accompanied expansion of the nearby Lincoln Memorial University with important implications for the Town. The community has a density of about 1,430 persons per square mile, almost ten times the average statewide density of 159 persons per square mile. This density is largely a result of the Town being almost completely surrounded by National Park land.

The most populated community in the ten county Cumberland Gap Region is Middlesboro, KY, which had an estimated 9,460 citizens in 2017. The City of Middlesboro is located just 4 miles northeast of Cumberland Gap, just across the Kentucky border. The proximity of both Middlesboro, KY and Harrogate, TN provide unique opportunities for Cumberland Gap.

### **Demographic Shift**

The demographic composition of Cumberland Gap has changed in a number of key ways over the last 10 years. With an estimated median age of 26, Cumberland Gap's population is much younger than those of the ten-county region (42 years old) or three state region (38 years old). Over the past 10 years, the population of Cumberland Gap has become 11 years younger, while those in the ten County region as a whole have become slightly older. This change in the age of Cumberland Gap has largely been driven by college age students, with the estimated portion of 18 to 24-year-old residents increasing from 7% to over 38% of the total population in the Gap over the past ten years.

The portion of households with children in Cumberland Gap (7%) is much lower than those in the ten-county region (31%) or three-state region (32%).

The demographics of Cumberland Gap have changed in a number of key ways over the last 10 years:

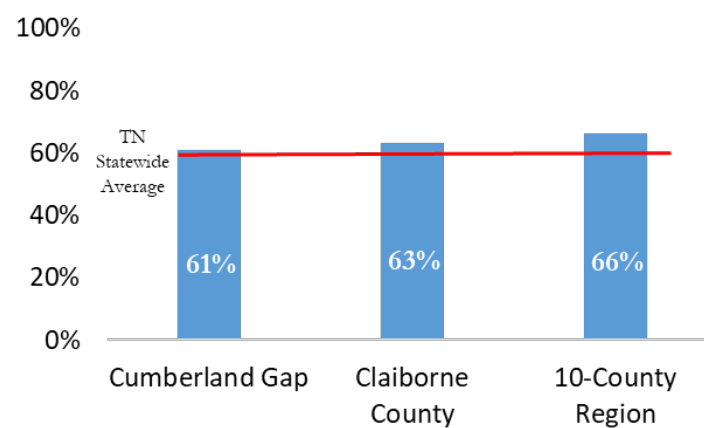
- Rapid growth of 14% per year
- Considerably younger than the region
- Higher portion of renter households
- Fewer households with children
- Steadily decreasing household incomes

Cumberland Gap has a much higher percentage of renter households (78%) than the average for the ten-County region (30%) or three-state region (34%).

Median household income in Cumberland Gap has steadily decreased over the years. In 2010, the median household income was about the same as regional incomes, in the \$30,000 - \$35,000 range. Since that time, household income has steadily decreased to about half that value. However, earnings per employed worker in the region remained fairly steady over this same period. This data suggests that rather than a decrease in wages, the change in household income may be heavily impacted by the influx of student households that are making only low to moderate incomes<sup>12</sup>.

### Cost of Living

The cost of living in Cumberland Gap remains lower than the county and region and is about the same as the statewide average. The Housing and Transportation Affordability Index (H+T Index) generated by the Center for Neighborhood Technology (CNT)<sup>13</sup> provides a comprehensive measure for cost of living at regional, city and neighborhood levels. The index scores locations by comparing median incomes in an area with median costs for housing and transportation in that same area. The figure below illustrates the H+T Index score for Cumberland Gap compared with Claiborne County, the ten-County region and the Tennessee Statewide average. The relative affordability of Cumberland Gap in comparison to income will likely continue to make Cumberland Gap a desirable community to live, work and play.



Percent Income Spent on Housing and Transportation  
Housing and Transportation Affordability Index (H+T Index)

### Industry and Economy

The major occupations for residents of the Gap include healthcare, education, arts, and service occupations. These have also been the fastest growing sectors in the local economy. In the town itself, food preparation and service-related jobs particularly stand out for their growth and prospects. According to estimates from the American Community Survey, only 10% of workers living in Cumberland Gap work within the Town. The majority of workers residing in Cumberland Gap commute to jobs in other parts of Claiborne County. Other major places of work include Bell and Knox Counties in Kentucky and Campbell County in Tennessee<sup>14</sup>.

In the 10-County Cumberland Gap region, there are a few clusters of distinct economic activity. The strongest industries for employment in the region include healthcare, retail and

<sup>12</sup> American Fact Finder, <https://factfinder.census.gov>, accessed 12/10/2018

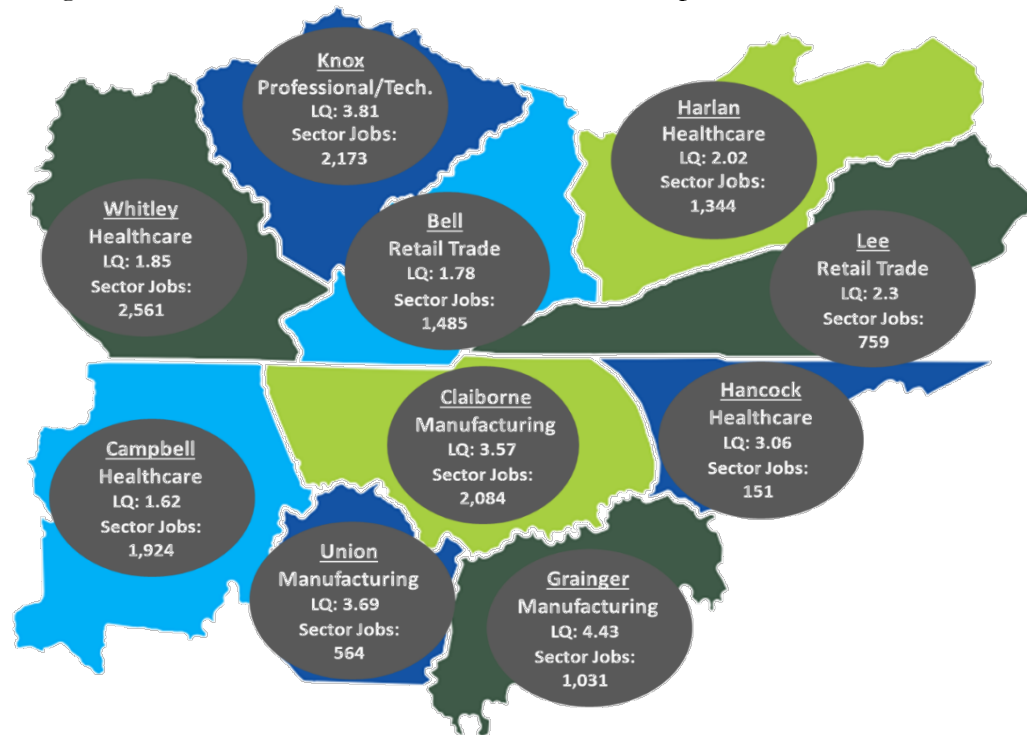
<sup>13</sup> <https://htaindex.cnt.org/>, accessed 12/10/2018

<sup>14</sup> 2011-2015 5-Year American Community Survey Commuting Flows, <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2015/demo/metro-micro/commuting-flows-2015.html>, accessed 12/12/2018

manufacturing, which collectively accounted for 28,893 jobs, 59% of the total jobs in the region.

To provide a more detailed look at opportunities and strengths in the 10-County region, a location quotient was calculated for each county. Location quotients are a simple ratio used to measure the concentration of industries in a region as compared to the concentrations of that same industry in the state and nation as a whole. Generally, if an industry has a location quotient of 1.5 or greater, it indicates that there is a level of specialization or

concentration for the industry in that particular area. Industry specialization or concentration in an area can represent numerous benefits for employers in an industry who are looking to expand or relocate. The benefits of industry concentration can include shared resources such as natural assets, supply chains and workforce training opportunities. The graphic below highlights the industries with the highest location quotient in each county as well as the total number of jobs in that sector for each county in the 10-County region<sup>15</sup>.



Of particular interest for economic development in the region are manufacturing in Grainger, Union and Claiborne Counties in Tennessee as well as professional and technical services in Knox County, Kentucky. These industries all had a location quotient greater than 3, indicating a remarkable concentration in those areas. These industries also provide the greatest export potential, bringing new money into the region.

Location Quotient and Total Employment by Industry for each County in the 10-County Cumberland Gap Region

<sup>15</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 County Business Patterns, <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/cbp.html>, accessed 2/1/2019



## **Key Community Assets**

The Town of Cumberland Gap contains several assets that provide the community with intrinsic opportunities to promote the economy and public health of its citizens. While not meant to be an exhaustive or exclusive list, the following sections summarize the key assets discovered during the planning process. These are assets that have and will continue to contribute to the unique character and high quality of life in Cumberland Gap and the region and could be used to effectively market the town and region.

Key community assets that can be leveraged in the Cumberland Gap include:

- Historic Characteristics
- Parks and Trails
- University Collaboration
- Artists and Creative Assets

## **Historic Characteristics**

Over the years, Cumberland Gap has played a significant role in regional and national history. Historic characteristics of Cumberland Gap provide the community with an indelible charm and connect historical events to opportunities in the community today.

Cumberland Gap's very namesake relates to the area's significance as a passage. As part of the Warriors' Path, this passage through

the Appalachian Mountains played a major role in tribal conflicts over resource rich hunting grounds. It provided a route for the greatest number of westward traveling settlers through the early 1800's. Control of the passage represented strategic advantage for both sides during the Civil War. Finally, the passage became important for companies who wished to access and extract the rich timber and coal resources in the surrounding mountains at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Much of the town of Cumberland Gap as we know it today was laid out and built by one such company, the American Association Limited, in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The design of the buildings is iconic and represents architectural detailing from the Queen-Anne and Craftsman/Bungalow styles of the period. Due to circumstance and local leadership, much of this development has been preserved and Cumberland Gap contains the most significant collection of properties in Claiborne County representing this period in history.



Historic Queen Anne and Craftsman/Bungalow style homes in Cumberland Gap

Recognizing this significance, a substantial portion of the town was designated as a historic district under the National Register of Historic Places in 1990. Assets contributing to the designation of the historic district include thirty-four commercial, residential, and public buildings, one significant monument, and three additional structures<sup>16</sup>. The location of these assets is illustrated in **Appendix C – Maps**. Visitors are welcomed into these historic buildings through a number of businesses located in the historic district including the Old Mill Inn Bed and Breakfast, the Artists Co-op, Angelo’s in the Gap restaurant and bar, the Pineapple Tea Room coffee shop, Gertie’s Commissary antique shop, and the former gas station at the corner of Colwyn Street and Cumberland Drive that now houses Whistle Stop Antiques. In addition to these business, the town’s historic buildings can be experienced through the Estep House across from Festival Park which provides short-term rentals, and the Town Hall building located at the corner of Colwyn Ave and Cumberland Drive. Historic homes throughout town open their doors periodically to visitors during holiday tours and “ghost” tours, where stories of hauntings in the buildings are shared.

Several unique cultural assets in Cumberland Gap and the surrounding area further contribute to the town’s historic feel and

create an exceptional setting for residents and visitors. Cumberland Gap owns a vibrant collection of *historical artifacts* that are currently housed above Town Hall. This substantial historic artifact collection includes old uniforms used by military, police, and city officials, antique firefighting apparatuses, tools used in developing the town and the area’s agricultural production, sewing boxes that were once a regular household amenity, personal belongings of past residents, buttons and campaign pins, old newspapers announcing historic events such as the end of World War II and the opening of the Cumberland Gap Tunnel, artwork produced by local artists, and a collection of historic guns including flintlock rifles from Daniel Boone’s era to weapons used in both World Wars. These unique historical artifacts could be used as a draw for local and regional tourism. By housing these objects in a more permanent location and providing regular public access, these historic pieces can be highlighted and celebrated for their history and significance.

*Gap Cave*, located just north of town and beneath the Pinnacle Point, was initially discovered in 1750. The cave was largely formed by the flow of water, with numerous rivers traveling through it at one time. Today, Gap Creek, a source of water and natural beauty, still flows from the cave before passing through Cumberland Gap.



Businesses and institutions in the Cumberland Gap Historic District

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister>

During the Civil War, the cave was explored by both sides and the second level was reportedly used as a hospital and for ammunition storage. Although ownership of the cave has changed several times over the years, commercial tours have been provided since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, creating an early draw for tourism to the region. To date, an estimated 14 miles of cave have been explored, and ranger-led tours are provided through a quarter mile section with remarkable geologic formations<sup>17</sup>.

In 1819, an **iron smelting furnace** was built along the Gap Creek as it flows into town. The furnace was constructed from large sandstone blocks carved from surrounding mountains. Fuel was provided from the surrounding woods, and a watermill in Gap Creek powered large bellows and a massive hammer mill. At its peak, the mill was producing almost 3 tons of iron each day, and operated intermittently from the 1820's through the 1880's. While much of the building has been removed, the site still contains the 30' remains of the blast furnace, a grass covered slag pile, a large stone with drill-holes for splitting it, and a portion of a flume cut to channel Gap Creek around the foundry. These artifacts are just a short distance from downtown and easily accessed by footpath from the Iron Furnace Parking area<sup>18</sup>.

**Tri-State Peak**, located just to the northwest of the town can be accessed by a one-mile trail leading from the Iron Furnace Parking area. As its namesake implies, the peak contains a marker designating where the three states of Kentucky, Tennessee, and Virginia come together. Interpretive signs and stone walls built on the state lines provide visitors with a visual reference for the state borders. Along the trail to the Tri-State Peak are a number of historic objects including carvings, monuments, a crater where a

Union army warehouse once stood, and a marker placed by the American Society of Civil Engineers denoting the location of the Royal Colonial Boundary of 1665.

The **Abraham Lincoln Library and Museum** (ALLM), located on the campus of Lincoln Memorial University just to the west of town, contains 21,000 square feet of exhibit galleries, vaults, and reading rooms, housing over 35,000 artifacts, manuscripts, photos, and rare books. It is one of the most significant collections of Lincoln and Civil War material in the country. At the request of Abraham Lincoln, the museum was founded by the efforts of General Oliver Howard to aid the mountain populace of Appalachia. Its origins are inextricably linked with the history of Unionist support in East Tennessee and the postwar spirit of patriotic reconciliation. The library and museum are open to both students and the public for a small admission fee<sup>19</sup>. The library

#### Cumberland Gap area historic resources:

- Cumberland Gap Historic District
- Town Hall Historic Artifact Collection
- Gap Cave
- Iron Furnace
- Tri-State Peak
- Abraham Lincoln Library and Museum
- Hensley Settlement
- Historic Reenactments

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.nps.gov/cuga/learn/nature/upload/cave-handout2.pdf>

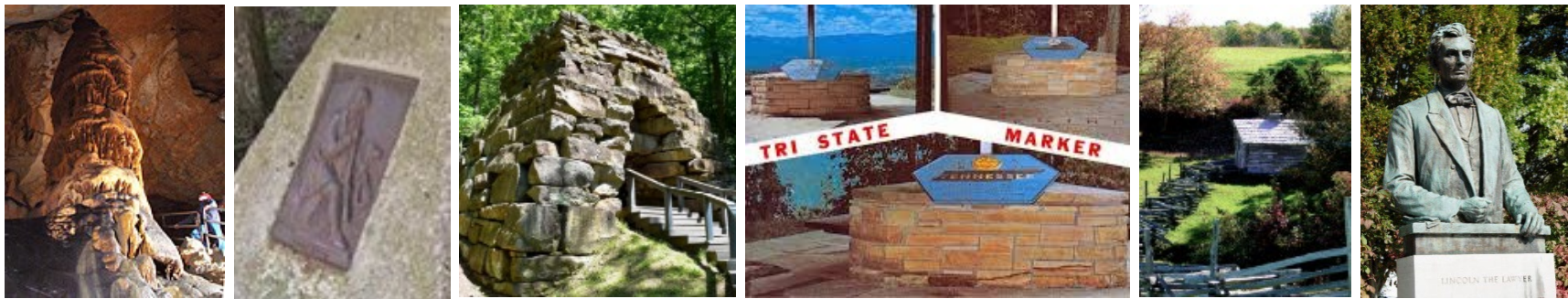
<sup>18</sup> <https://www.nps.gov/cuga/learn/historyculture/iron-furnace.htm>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.lmunet.edu/academics/abraham-lincoln-library-and-museum-1/>

and museum are located on the Kentucky Lincoln Memorial Trail, which ties together and promotes historic sites and museums in the region with links to President Lincoln and his legacy. Administration of a website and advocacy for museums and sites along the trail are provided by the Kentucky Lincoln Heritage Trail Alliance (KLHTA). This organization also supports heritage tourism, education, and preservation in communities along the Lincoln Memorial Trail<sup>20</sup>.

**Hensley Settlement** located about 15 miles from Cumberland Gap in the Cumberland Gap National Historical Park is an Appalachian Living History Museum with regular tours provided through the park visitor center. Located atop Brush Mountain, the Settlement was founded by the Hensley Family in 1903 as a way to live an entirely self-sufficient lifestyle in the Appalachian Mountains. The settlement was inhabited without electricity, indoor plumbing, or roadways until its last resident left in 1951. Over 20 of the original buildings and the surrounding land have been restored to their original appearance, giving visitors a sense of how this rural Appalachian lifestyle must have looked.

Cumberland Gap's **historic reenactments** celebrate momentous events in the town's history. They have received wide praise and provide an example for reenactments carried out across the country. The first reenactment was organized in the late 1990's. The organizers of the event championed the significant history of the Cumberland Gap in recruiting reenactors and spectators from throughout the region. Beginning in the early 2000's, reenactments of the march over the mountains were held in the Cumberland Gap National Historic Park, including the reenactment of a large encampment in the park itself. The most recent reenactment in the town itself in 2013 drew in over 200 reenactors and a couple thousand visitors over a single weekend. Children's activities held as part of the event drew in busloads of students from Bell and Claiborne County schools. Building on the success of these events, a special events committee in Cumberland Gap could negotiate and maintain insurance and licensure needed for future reenactments and promote targeted events that celebrate the town's unique historic and cultural aspects.



Historic Cultural Assets surrounding Cumberland Gap

<sup>20</sup> <http://abelincoln.tours/>

The significance of Cumberland Gap as a passage through the mountains, the story of company towns in East Tennessee, and the significant historic assets in the area provide powerful material for marketing of the town and region.

Furthermore, as illustrated by the mentor communities, these historic resources can be capitalized on for preservation and economic development through state and national programs such as the Certified Local Governments and Main Streets programs (See **Appendix B – Mentor Community Lessons White Paper**).

### **Parks and Trails**

Surrounded on nearly all sides by mountains and forest and lying at the convergence of a number of regional trails, the natural heritage of Cumberland Gap is an important aspect of the community's identity.

#### ***Within Cumberland Gap***

Despite its small area, the town of Cumberland Gap maintains an impressive number of parks that provide places for recreation, exercise and community gatherings. These parks include a dog park, a brick paved gathering place and performance venue in the heart of town, a grassy park with a pavilion, seating, and stage that often hosts LMU theatre activities, and a playground and basketball court adjacent to Town Hall. The Iron Furnace trailhead at the end of Pennlyn Ave in the northwest corner of town provides an entrance to the trails and activities in the Cumberland Gap National Historical Park. The unnamed Cumberland Gap to Harrogate Greenway also starts at this trailhead. This multiuse path winds through town before passing through a tunnel and south to

Harrogate and LMU, providing direct non-motorized access between the towns and the University. Cumberland Gap recently participated in a county-wide parks and recreation master plan in which its parks were fully evaluated, and recommendations were provided for enhancing these parks and continuing to provide the parks and recreation services that make the town an exceptional place. The Plan's recommendations include enhancing wayfinding and non-motorized connectivity, making all parks ADA accessible, and pursuing a trail town identity for Cumberland Gap<sup>21</sup>.

#### ***Cumberland Gap National Historical Park***

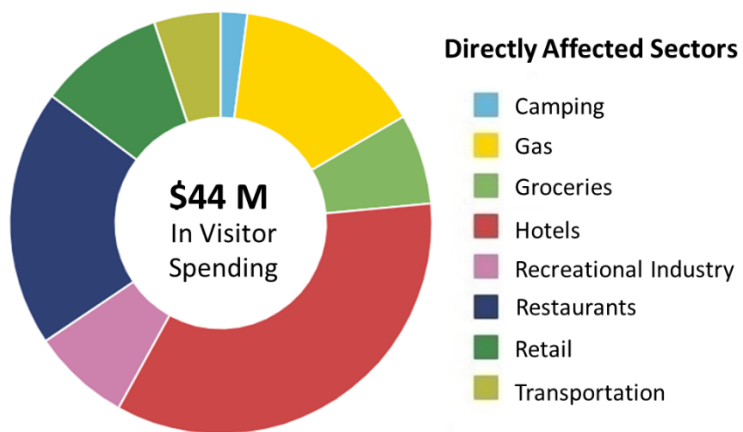
The Cumberland Gap National Historical Park (CGNHP) is the largest historical park in the country. The park was established by the National Park Service in 1940 to commemorate the crossing of the first major barrier westward along 26 miles of the mountainous borders of Kentucky, Tennessee, and Virginia. Land for the park was purchased and donated by all three of these states. The park contains over 20,000 acres of forests and natural areas and



<sup>21</sup> <https://adobe.ly/2F5XuoM>

provides over 80 miles of walking trails<sup>22</sup>. The Ridge Trail traverses the length of the park along the Virginia-Kentucky border and connects to a number of points of interest including several backcountry campsites, as well as Hensley Settlement, Skylight Cave, Sand Cave, and White Rocks<sup>23</sup>. Hiking along the ridge also provides remarkable views of the park and farmland in the valleys below. Other trails in the CGNHP provide numerous day hikes and overnight trips. In addition to hiking, a number of the trails are open to horseback riding and mountain biking. This trail network can be accessed from the Iron Furnace Trailhead located at the end of Pennlyn Ave in the northwest corner of town as well as the Daniel Boone Visitor Information Center just to the northeast of town<sup>24</sup>.

Visitors to the CGNHP have a tremendous impact on local economies as well. In 2018, 684,191 visitors spent over \$44 million



Annual Economic Impact of the CGNHP

<sup>22</sup> <https://tennesseencyclopedia.net/entries/cumberland-gap-and-cumberland-gap-national-historical-park/>

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.nps.gov/cuga/planyourvisit/upload/GUIDE-TO-DAY-HIKES.pdf>

in surrounding regions. These expenditures supported over 600 jobs, nearly \$19 million in labor income, \$32 million in value added, and \$56 million in economic output in local economies surrounding Cumberland Gap National Historical Park<sup>25</sup>. If more of the visitors to the Park were directed into Cumberland Gap for food, fuel, gear and shelter, it could have a tremendous impact on the town's economy.

In addition to the Cumberland Gap National Historical Park, the Cumberland Gap lies at a crossroads for a number of significant regional trails. An introduction to these trails and their role in the region is presented in the sections that follow.

### *Daniel Boone/Wilderness Road Trail*

The Daniel Boone Wilderness Trail begins at Long Island in the Holston River as it passes through Kingsport Tennessee. This is where Daniel Boone and his men landed before setting out westward to cross the Appalachians at the Cumberland Gap. The entire trail runs about 80 miles. From Long Island to Ewing, VA the trail is largely conceptual as it runs mostly along bike routes, backroads, and highways. From a Park & Ride in Ewing to



Interactive Map of the Daniel Boone Wilderness Trail

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.nps.gov/cuga/planyourvisit/>

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/socialscience/vse.htm>

Cumberland Gap, about 10 miles of multiuse trail takes travelers into the Cumberland Gap National Historical Park and to the Daniel Boone Visitor Information Center, less than a quarter mile from the Cumberland Gap town boundary. This Visitor Information Center provides parking, an outdoor pavilion, informational plaques, maps, sculptures and recorded histories that play over speakers. A wooden archway gives visitors pause as they enter the trail. Along its entire length, the trail passes a number of notable waypoints including the Netherland Inn Museum, Anderson Blockhouse, Speers Ferry, Natural Tunnel State Park, Priest's Fort, and the Wilderness Road State Park. The Daniel Boone Wilderness Trail Association maintains a website with an interactive map of the route and attractions along the trail<sup>26</sup>.

The Wilderness Road Trail picks up where the Daniel Boone Wilderness Trail ends. The trail continues to follow the route taken by Boone and his team through the mountains and into Kentucky, where it connects with the Harlan Road Trail and Ridge Trail before ending at the Wilderness Road Parking area.

### ***Boone Trace***

The Boone Trace follows the Daniel Boone and Wilderness Road trails through Tennessee and Virginia and connects them with the route that Boone and his team forged up through Kentucky for about 150 miles to Fort Boonesborough State Park, 20 miles east of Lexington.

In 2018, the Friends of the Boone Trace generated the Boone Trace Master Plan with the goal of creating a multi-modal trail most closely following the original Boone Trace. The trail will provide a route for pedestrians and cyclists, as well as equestrian and motorized users where appropriate. The route will take visitors

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<sup>26</sup> <http://danielboonetrail.com>

through 15 jurisdictions in Kentucky, providing economic opportunities for the entire region.

The Boone Trace Master Plan provides recommendations and steps to establish this trail as it runs through the Cumberland Gap National Historical Park and five Kentucky counties. Overall recommendations are provided for the entire length of the trail and prioritized recommendations are provided for each County. Among the recommendations for Bell County and the Cumberland Gap National Historical Park are to provide enhanced signage and maps to aid hikers with wayfinding in the park as well as a promotional video to be dispersed countywide, celebrating the trail and the role of the Boone Trace in American history. Friends of the Boone Trace have developed a website with an interactive map of the route and attractions along the trail, as well as numerous resources on the Boone Trace and its history<sup>27</sup>.



### ***Cumberland Trail***

The Justin P. Wilson Cumberland Trail State Park began development in the 1960s, with the ambitious goal of providing a path from the Cumberland Gap Historical Park to the Tennessee River Gorge on the Tennessee/Alabama/Georgia border. To date,

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.boonetrace1775.com>



over 210 miles of this remote trail have already been constructed and can be accessed at its junction with thirteen major parks and wilderness areas and over 50 trailheads. When complete, the trail will provide over 300 continuous trail miles, will connect numerous jurisdictions through 11 counties, and will provide a new source for tourism and economic development in east Tennessee.

The trail traverses the length of the Cumberland Mountains as they run through Tennessee and will only be open to foot traffic. Aside from recreational opportunities, the trail will provide prospects for conservation and environmental and cultural education. The Cumberland Trails Conference (CTC), is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation created to acquire funding, to build and promote the trail, and to host annual volunteer events in support of the trail. The CTC, along with Tennessee's Department of Environment and Conservation, and numerous other government agencies and private organizations are all working together to acquire the land needed to develop the missing sections and complete the trail. In addition to its advocacy and development work, the CTC also maintains a website with up-to-date information on existing trail sections, maps, and volunteer information<sup>28</sup>.

### *Great Eastern Trail*

When complete, the Cumberland Trail will connect to the south with the Lookout Mountain Trail in Georgia and to the north with the Pine Mountain Trail in Kentucky to form a major section of the Great Eastern Trail (GET). The GET is a national trail currently in development that will run from Alabama to New York to provide hikers with an alternative to the popular Appalachian



<sup>28</sup> <https://www.cumberlandtrail.org/>





Trail. About 70% of the GET connects preexisting regional trails. When complete, the GET will run over 1,600 miles, connecting with a spur of the Florida Trail on its southern end and the North Country Scenic Trail on its northern end. The GET traverses the western side of the

Appalachians which are much less explored than the Blue Ridge and Allegheny ranges of the Appalachian Trail. As such, the GET allows trail users to explore a part of the country that few people have experienced.

Cumberland Gap will be the northern terminus of the Cumberland Trail and is in a key location to take advantage of both the Cumberland Trail and the Great Eastern Trail. Furthermore, as the Cumberland Trail is completed, State Park officials have discussed developing a trailhead in the town of Cumberland Gap. Damascus, Virginia, another small town, similarly situated on the Appalachian Trail and Virginia Creeper Trail has hundreds of thousands of trail users visit to the town annually. It has done much over recent years to develop itself as a trailhead for these trails. As a result, trail users who visit the town for gear, food, and lodging have had a substantial impact on the local economy (See

“As the Cumberland Trail is completed, State Park officials have discussed developing a trailhead in the town of Cumberland Gap.”

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/state-parks/wilderness-road>

**Mentor** Communities section). As awareness and foot traffic on the Cumberland and Great Eastern Trail pick up, and the town takes the necessary steps to build its resources for trail users, it could have a profound impact on both the town and region.

### *Nearby Parks in KY, TN and VA*

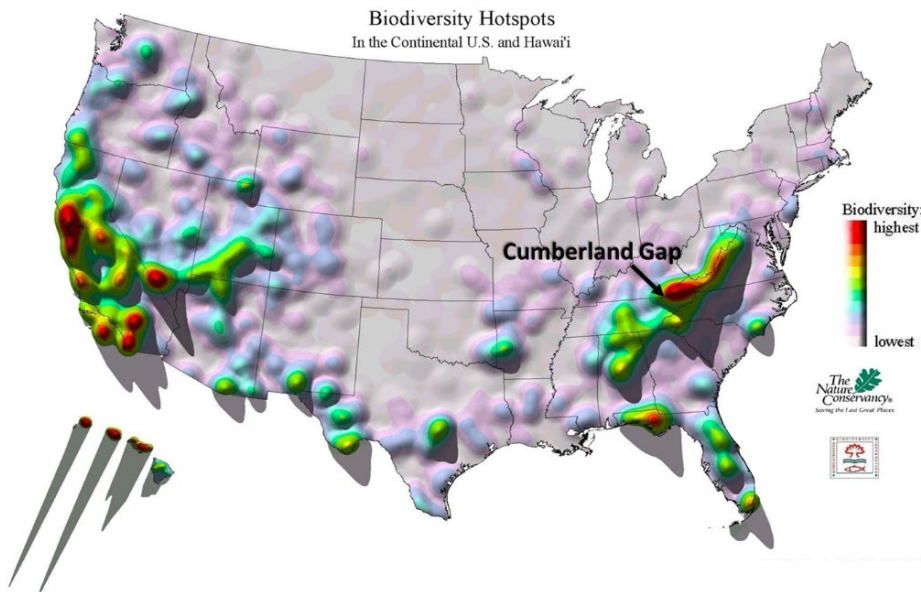
Nearby parks in Kentucky, Tennessee, and Virginia provide additional opportunities to visitors and residents of Cumberland Gap. Wilderness Road Park is located just 8 miles to the east of Cumberland Gap in Lee County Virginia. The Park allows visitors to experience the area’s unique natural and historic qualities through a Visitor’s Center, a frontier museum and a gift shop, the Martin’s Station reconstructed 18<sup>th</sup> century settlement, and several hiking, biking, and horseback riding trails. The Park also contains a 100-seat amphitheater, playgrounds, and the 1870’s Karlan Mansion which is available for rent as an event space<sup>29</sup>. Pine Mountain State Resort Park is Kentucky’s oldest State Park and is located less than thirty minutes north of Cumberland Gap. The park encompasses over 1,700 acres and provides opportunities for hiking on over 12 miles of trails with scenic vistas, birding with many species found nowhere else in the state, multiple golf courses, an ADA compliant swimming pool, multiple shelters and picnicking areas, and an outdoor amphitheater. Special events hosted by the park include a Summer Concert Series, the Pine Mountain State Resort Park Mountain Bike Enduro race, the Narrows Falls Encampment and Battle reenactment, several regional plays, periodic guided hikes, and junior naturalist days. Overnight accommodations at the park are available through the 30-room Herndon J. Evans Lodge, as well as rustic cottages and log cabins.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>30</sup> <https://parks.ky.gov/parks/resortparks/pine-mountain/>

Several Wildlife Management Areas (WMA's) in Tennessee lie near Cumberland Gap, offering visitors and residents countless hiking, birding, fishing, and hunting opportunities. The Tackett Creek, North Cumberland, North Cumberland Sundquist Unit, North Cumberland Royal Blue Unit, and Chuck Swan Wildlife Management Areas provide over 200,000 combined acres of managed wildlife areas that can be accessed in less than an hour's drive from Cumberland Gap<sup>31</sup>.

Finally, Cumberland Gap is situated centrally in a region that has been well documented for its biodiversity. More than 158 tree species can be found within the region, ranking it among the highest plant diversity ecoregions in North America. This southern Appalachian region also contains more than 225 terrestrial

vertebrate species and some of the greatest diversity of salamanders, freshwater fish and mussels in the world<sup>32</sup>. Noting the value of this biodiversity, the Nature Conservancy and other conservation organizations have purchased substantial tracts of land in the region for preservation, conservation and outdoor recreation and have been working with local jurisdictions to maximize the benefits of these properties to the local tourism and economies. As these properties continue to be purchased and organized for conservation and recreational purposes, they could have substantial benefits for Cumberland Gap and the surrounding region.



#### Cumberland park and trail resources:

- Cumberland Gap Parks and Recreation
- Cumberland Gap National Historical Park
- Daniel Boone/Wilderness Road Trail
- Boone Trace
- Cumberland Trail
- Great Eastern Trail
- Nearby Parks in KY, TN, and VA

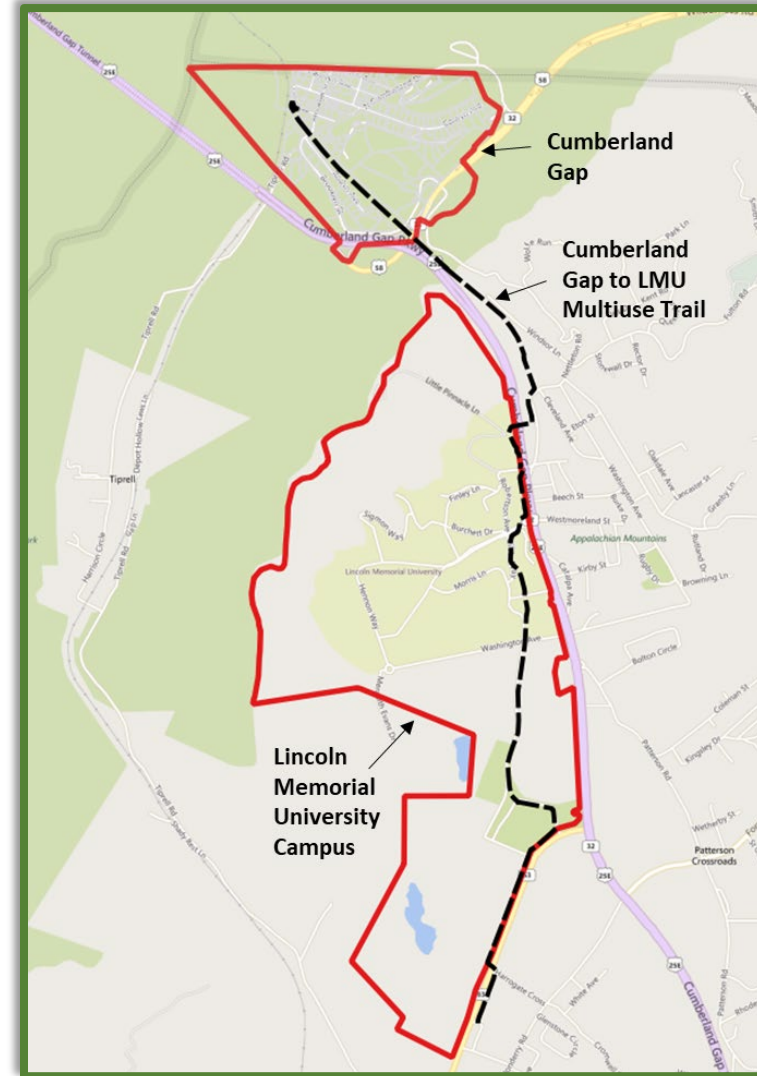
<sup>31</sup> <https://www.tn.gov/twra/gis-maps/wildlife-management-area--wma--maps.html>, Accessed and modified, 6/10/2019

<sup>32</sup> <https://www.worldwildlife.org/ecoregions/na0403>, Accessed 6/11/2019

## University Collaboration

The proximity of a college or university can provide substantial benefits to local economic opportunity. In smaller communities, universities are often a major employer. In addition to jobs, they also provide innovative technologies and services, job training, and boost spending in local businesses. Similarly, universities have come to recognize the economic and social conditions of local communities can have a profound impact on their campus and student population<sup>33</sup>. For example, as a growing portion of students chose to eat, shop, and even live off campus, quality of life has become a much greater priority in student choices among institutions.

Lincoln Memorial University (LMU) has its main campus in Harrogate just a short walk from the heart of Cumberland Gap. The 1,000-acre campus hosts over 1,900 undergraduate students and 2,800 graduate and professional students across 43 academic, administrative, and residential buildings. LMU was founded in 1897 as a living memorial to Abraham Lincoln and is committed to serving students throughout Appalachia and beyond. In addition to its main campus, LMU has developed Extended Learning Sites in Alcoa TN, Chattanooga TN, Kingsport TN, Knoxville TN, Corbin KY, Ewing VA, and Tampa FL<sup>34</sup>. Over the last ten years, the University developed the DeBusk College of Osteopathic Medicine (DCOM) at its Harrogate campus which has had a significant impact on the graduate and professional student body and a resulting impact on the population and demographics of Cumberland Gap and the surrounding region (see **Demographic and Economic Trends** section).



<sup>33</sup> The Innovation Journal: The Public Sector Innovation Journal, Volume 10 (2), 2005, article 3. Lawrence Martin, Hayden Smith, Wende Phillips, *Bridging 'Town & Gown' Through Innovative University-Community Partnerships*

<sup>34</sup> <https://www.lmunet.edu/about-lmu/quick-facts.php>

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Office of University Partnerships (OUP) summarizes university-town partnerships in seven broad categories:

1. Student service learning
2. Long-term non-credit revitalization initiatives
3. Faculty involvement
4. Student volunteer opportunities
5. ‘Community in the classroom’ opportunities
6. Applied research
7. Major institutional changes<sup>35</sup>

Building on these categories, increased partnerships between Cumberland Gap and LMU could ensure the needs of the community are incorporated into the strategies and activities of both entities. Structured programs that encourage participation and collaboration between the entities could include regular presentations and speeches at LMU by town administrators, structured internship programs with Cumberland Gap, regularly scheduled volunteer days, and specific events that bring students, residents, and business owners together (See **Mentor Communities** section for examples). The Educational Partnerships for Innovation in Communities – Network (EPIC-N) is an international nonprofit association that provides a framework, considerations, and support for developing successful relationships between communities and universities. These resources should be utilized as Cumberland Gap continues to develop its relationship with LMU (<https://www.epicn.org/>).


Each year, LMU develops a strategic plan for the coming 5-year period. The 2019-2024 Strategic Plan, the most recent strategic

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<sup>35</sup> Andrew, Cuomo, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 1999, University Community Partnerships—Current Practices, Volume 3

plan published by the University, projected a growth rate that would double the student population at their campuses over the coming 15 years. University officials reported that much of this growth is projected for their Extended Learning Sites, and they anticipate future growth at their main Campus to occur at a slower rate. Although at a slower rate, the student population at the main campus is anticipated to continue growing, with a faster growth anticipated for the graduate and medical student body. These are the students that are more likely to locate off campus and live in the Cumberland Gap and the surrounding area. The continued growth of the graduate and medical student body could present challenges and opportunities for the town. In addition to future changes in their student body, LMU owns about 38 acres of property in Cumberland Gap. This amounts to about 18% of the total land area of Cumberland Gap. Whether these properties are developed for student activities, businesses, recreation, or other uses, they could have a substantial impact on the future of Cumberland Gap. Over the long run, future strategic changes to the University could also have a significant impact on Cumberland Gap.

“Structured programs that encourage participation and collaboration between the entities could include regular presentations and speeches at LMU by town administrators, structured internship programs, regularly scheduled volunteer days, and specific events that bring students, residents, and business owners together.”



Recognizing the central role that the university and town play for one another, LMU was consulted multiple times during this planning process. At the request of the planning team, LMU sent a representative to attend the Cumberland Gap Master Plan Workshops held in April 2019 and agreed to invite a representative from Cumberland Gap and the Cumberland Gap National Historical Park to attend their July 2019 Annual Strategic Planning Retreat.

### ***2019 LMU Annual Strategic Planning Retreat***

On July 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> of 2019, LMU's annual strategic planning retreat was held on the Harrogate Campus of LMU and both Mayor Pucciarelli and Cumberland Gap National Historical Park interim Superintendent Allen Etheredge were in attendance. This meeting provided the opportunity for them to listen to the priorities and assets presented by the deans of various departments and to network with deans, trustees, and administration officials. This meeting also resulted in renewed discussions between the Mayor and members on the LMU board of trustees. LMU plans to invite the Mayor to future strategic planning meetings and send representatives to planning meetings for both the town and Cumberland Gap National Park.

### ***Formalized Internship and Community Service Classes***

During the planning process, discussions were held between the Mayor, Deans, and administration officials for departments at LMU. In August of 2019, a meeting was held between Mayor Pucciarelli, Martin Sellers, PhD, Dean of the School of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences, Michael Toomey, Assistant Dean of the School of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences, Stephen Akins, Assistant Professor of Public Administration with the Duncan School of Law, and Erin Johnston, Administrative Assistant for the School of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences. The planning

team reviewed the potential role of interns and classroom service in Cumberland Gap, and potential learning outcomes associated with those projects. The key opportunities for internships and class service that were discussed include:

- **Marketing** needs in Cumberland Gap
- **Establishing a 501(C)(3) Non-Profit** organization to work cooperatively with the town of Cumberland Gap
- Development and administration of **Certified Local Gov & TN Main Streets** programs

The representatives from LMU at this meeting expressed excitement about providing lasting collaboration and shared learning opportunities between their departments and the Town of Cumberland Gap. Brief descriptions of the projects listed above along with learning objectives were requested so that specific internship positions could be developed. The group also discussed establishing a **Special Events Committee** and the role that could be played by the University on that Committee. Representatives from the Admissions Department and the coordinator of the Arts in the Gap program could play key roles on that committee. The group also discussed the possibility of an annual Health Fair to promote healthy living in the community and region.

### ***Volunteer Community Service Opportunities***

All students at LMU who receive scholarships are required to provide 20 hours of community service each year. In addition, the University hosts approximately 40 clubs that gain recognition through their participation in school activities and community service. These organizations and requirements present another opportunity for Cumberland Gap to strategically fill some of its pressing needs.

## Artists and Creative Assets

Throughout the ages, poets, songwriters, novelists, journal writers, historians and artists have been drawn to and have told the stories of Cumberland Gap. Over the years, the area has produced well-known artists and activists, such as authors and poets, James Still, Jesse Stuart, and Don West, whose works had not only regional but national impacts. The arts continue to flourish in Cumberland Gap today, with a remarkable concentration of local artists, crafters, musicians and makers as well as the variety of businesses that support the arts in town, engaging residents and visitors alike. Perhaps this concentration of art is inspired by the idyllic setting, a feeling of connection with history, or the sense of relative isolation surrounded by the mountains. In any case, the enduring creation

and support for the arts has been a defining characteristic of Cumberland Gap.

Artists and creatives that currently make, display and sell work in Cumberland Gap include potters, sculptors, woodworkers, stained glass artists, weavers, quilters, metalworkers, photographers, painters, and mixed media artists. Gospel, country, and bluegrass music have long been celebrated by a range of local musicians, and until recently, the “Cumberland Mountain Music Show” provided a monthly opportunity to share this music. Many artists in the town and region make and sell their work through the Artists Co-op located next to Festival Park on Colwyn Avenue in the heart of town.



## Creative Businesses

The many creative entrepreneurs in Cumberland Gap are supported by businesses that provide opportunities to make, sell, and display arts, crafts, instruments, and artifacts unique to the local area.

### *Cumberland Gap Artist's Co-op*

Aside from displaying and selling the wares of the local artists described above, the Artists Co-op provides workshops for both children and adults at its location in the heart of the historic district, adjacent to Festival Park. Regular workshops held by the Co-op include those for painting, quilting, tatting, woodworking, pottery, photography and illustration. After-school art classes are offered to children from local schools. The Co-op also provides a venue for several special events throughout the year<sup>36</sup>.

### *Paul V. Hamilton Center for the Arts*

The Paul V. Hamilton Center for the Arts is LMU's main art facility, housing most of classes for the university's art concentrations. The Center is located on Brooklyn St and Lynn St near the heart of Cumberland Gap. During the summer months, the Center provides children's and adult classes to the general public. Classes include those in the areas of drawing, oil painting, acrylic painting, ceramics, and wood working. In addition to classes, the Center also houses an exhibition gallery that hosts monthly art shows and is open to the public. The Center is also a venue for



<sup>36</sup> <https://www.cumberlandgapartistscoop.com/about>



Paul V. Hamilton Center for the Arts

many of the activities hosted by Arts in the Gap (AITG). AITG is an initiative dedicated to the creativity and cultural heritage of Appalachia within the Cumberland Gap community and region. The initiative includes speaker series, performances, workshops, and events throughout the year in the areas of performing arts, visual arts, and creative writing with the goal of making Cumberland Gap a gathering place for artists and creatives. The greatest number of these events occur in the months of June and July<sup>37</sup>. Finally, in addition to the classes and gallery, the Center promotes other local businesses such as the Old Mill Bed and Breakfast among its students, staff, faculty, and visiting artists. The director of the Center was contacted by the planning team, and he reported that the Center is open to new ideas for collaborating with the town, including potential internship programs that support

<sup>37</sup> <https://www.lmunet.edu/about-lmu/community/arts-in-the-gap/>

arts, creative businesses, and historic preservation in Cumberland Gap such as the Certified Local Governments program or the Main Streets Initiative (See **Appendix B – Mentor Community Lessons White Paper**).

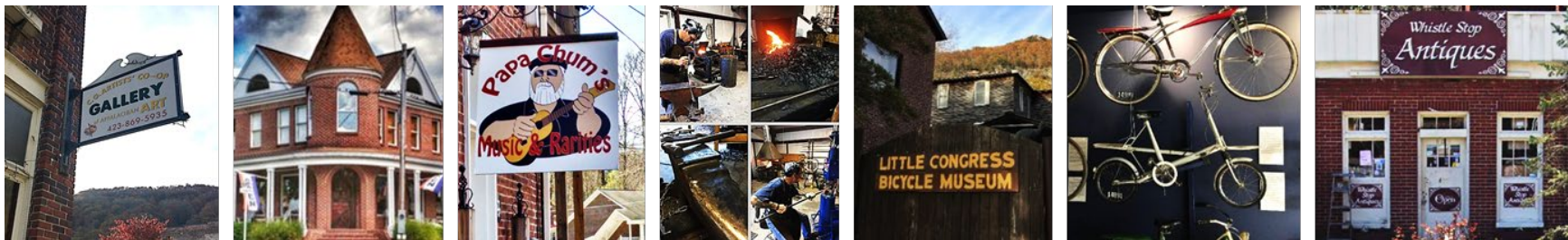
### *Papa Chum’s Music & Rarities*

Papa Chum’s Music & Rarities, located at 704 Brooklyn Street, sells vinyl records, a variety of new and used instruments, jewelry, crafts, natural soaps, and vintage magazines. The shop’s motto, “we dig local music” is embodied in much of what they do. Over the years, Papa Chum’s has worked with and sold the works of local artists. Local musicians provide private lessons for guitar, bass, ukulele and more. The store also does minor guitar repairs. In addition to the instruments and lessons in their shop, Papa Chum’s also provides sound systems for local events such as the White Lightning Festival and Mountain Fiesta. The shop also collaborates with local businesses such as the Pineapple Tea Room to provide regular open mic nights. Papa Chum’s also supports the arts by giving back to the local community. The shop is intimately involved in the Claiborne County Junior Appalachian Musicians (JAM) program. JAM is an after-school program for children in grades 4 – 8 and beyond that introduces music through small group instruction on instruments common to the

Appalachian region, such as fiddle, banjo and guitar. With the belief that engaging children in traditional music will prepare them to strengthen local community, JAM endeavors to provide all children with the tools and support to play and dance to traditional old time and bluegrass music. The program runs through the school year and normally costs \$50 per participant, but these costs can be offset with scholarships. Papa Chum’s provides both instructors and scholarship funding for this program<sup>38</sup>.

### *Mitty’s Metal Art Studio and Shop*

Mitty's Metal Art Studio and Shop is a blacksmith, metal art studio located on Lynn Avenue. Operated by metal artist, Ryan Schmidt, Mitty’s Metal Art Studio and Shop opened in 2016, and provides sculptural and artistic pieces including custom works for interior designers, landscape architects, and a range of private clients. The shop puts on regular blacksmithing demonstrations and events in locations throughout the region. The business has seen significant recent growth with substantial clients in Knoxville and Nashville, and is looking to expand its staff and production.



<sup>38</sup> <https://jamkids.org>, accessed 6/25/2019



### ***The Frame Shop & Gallery***

The Frame Shop & Gallery has been operating in Cumberland Gap for over 40 years and serves clients throughout the tri-state region. The 1500 sq. ft. Shop & Gallery is located at the corner of Colwyn St and N. Cumberland Drive. The shop provides fine custom framing for all types of artwork including drawings, paintings, photographs, posters, maps, antiques, and craft projects. The shop also develops unique custom frames such as shadow boxes to hold and display memorabilia, artifacts, and family heirlooms. The shop also provides a catalog of limited-edition fine art prints, posters, and images for sale and does repairs on damaged photographs and frames. Through its network developed over years of operation, the shop will assist clients in searching for rare or discontinued art prints. The shop has worked with LMU to develop and establish displays of historically significant documents and artifacts, and offers discounts to artists from the Cumberland Gap Artists Co-op.

### ***Little Congress Bicycle Museum***

The Little Congress Bicycle Museum on Llewelyn Street presents an impressive collection of bicycles through which visitors can experience the role of the bicycle throughout history. The museum is free, but donations are accepted. Owner and curator, Judge R.E. McClanahan II has been collecting bicycles for over 40 years and has set up a specially curated display for some of the most notable of these bicycles, including paint and lighting that highlight the bikes and plaques that provide useful historical information. The oldest of the bicycles in the collection is a Wolff-American bicycle built in 1897. The collection also includes several rather unique bicycles including a 1934 Elgin Blackhawk with a massive top tube

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<sup>39</sup> <https://www.bicyclemuseum.net>

tank and low-slung frame characteristic of the mid 1930's style, and a 1966 J.C. Higgins with characteristic curved top tube and 24 inch wheels.


As McClanahan puts it, this museum and collection is a "monument to a machine that has influenced our country in everything from motorized flight to women's rights"<sup>39</sup>.

### ***Gertie's Commissary and Whistle Stop Antiques***

Antique shops in Cumberland Gap provide a wide variety of vintage souvenirs and gifts. Whistle Stop Antiques is located in the 1920's era Shell Gas Station on Colwyn Street and Pinnacle Alley. The shop is one of the oldest stores in town, having been operating in this location for over 20 years. Gertie's Commissary located in the old train depot on Colwyn Street has been open for about 10

#### Creative Businesses in Cumberland Gap:

- Cumberland Gap Artist's Co-op
- Paul V. Hamilton Center for the Arts
- Papa Chum's Music and Rarities
- Mitty's Metal Art Studio and Shop
- The Frame Shop & Gallery
- The Little Congress Bicycle Museum
- Gertie's Commissary Antiques
- Whistle Stop Antiques



years. Both shops are open 7 days a week and provide an eclectic assortment of local goods including small antiques local to the area, crafts, and memorabilia such as t-shirts and mugs. Over the years, the owner of these shops, Joe Wolfenbarger, has hosted antique shows in Cumberland Gap and this year was the first annual “Last Saturday in April” antique show, which he plans to continue and expand into a fall show as well.

See **Appendix C – Maps** for the location of these creative businesses in Cumberland Gap.

### **Special Events**

Special events in Cumberland Gap provide another venue for artists, musicians and other creative expression.

#### ***White Lightning Trail Festival***

The White Lightning Trail Festival is one of the area’s largest festivals, pulling participants the greater region into the town of Cumberland Gap over two days. The Festival was created to celebrate east Tennessee, folk life, and southern Appalachian culture. At the event, dozens of vendors provide arts, crafts, food, and specialty items. The festival is free and is organized by Claiborne County Tourism in collaboration with Cumberland Gap and local artists. The event itself takes its name from the 200-mile White Lightning Trail motorist route that highlights many significant historical places and events in east Tennessee including the route used to transport bootleg moonshine during prohibition and the subsequent traditions of stock racing and NASCAR racing. The route connects several notable historic communities in east Tennessee, including Cumberland Gap, Clinton, Dandridge,

Newport, Norris, and Rocky Top. Finally, the Trail also follows along the East Tennessee Crossing Scenic Byway<sup>40</sup>.

#### ***Mountain Fiesta***


Mountain Fiesta, a celebration of Latin American and Appalachian culture, has quickly become one of the most popular and well-attended festivals in Cumberland Gap. This free event includes professional dance classes, live music, art demonstrations, and a variety of Latin American and Appalachian cultural activities. The festival was started in 2017 and had about 300 participants and 5 vendors its first year. Since its inception, the event has grown quickly, and now hosts close to 3X as many participants and vendors. Performers and workshop instructors this year came from Chicago, Louisville, and Knoxville. The event has largely been driven and organized by students from LMU who have worked with the East Tennessee Foundation, built relationships, and targeted advertising in the Cumberland Gap region. The organizers of the event saw that Latin American Festivals were already being held in the region with the HoLa Festival in Knoxville, the Morristown Latino Food Festival, and Festival Latino de Lexington (just to name a few). With Cumberland Gap in a central location amongst these other Latin American celebrations, the organizers saw the town in a unique position to build on these events to connect Latin American and Appalachian culture.

#### ***Genealogy Jamboree and Pioneer Days***

Genealogy Jamboree and Pioneer Days is an annual free festival in Cumberland Gap where participants can learn about their heritage and family history, observe craft demonstrations and historical reenactments, and purchase historical books, handmade soaps, jewelry, coal carvings, cane chairs, blacksmith works, and many

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<sup>40</sup> <https://www.tnvacation.com/trails/east/knoxville/white-lightning-trail>



other traditional and homemade items. The Festival is carried out in October along the streets of downtown Cumberland Gap.

### ***Mountain Heritage Literary Festival***

The Mountain Heritage Literary Festival, organized by LMU originated with writer in residence, Silas House. The annual event draws in writers from throughout the country to celebrate writing, music, and Appalachian heritage. The event includes classes, concerts and performances, talks and lectures, book readings, and an awards ceremony. The festival is now in its 14<sup>th</sup> year, and as it has gained recognition, has helped establish LMU and the area as central to the Appalachian literary movement<sup>41</sup>.

### ***Art Extravaganza***

Art Extravaganza is an annual event hosted by the Cumberland Gap Artists Co-op to celebrate and promote the arts and crafts of Appalachian artisans from TN, KY, and VA. This June event provides a venue for these artists to buy, sell, and share their works. This year's event also included live music and a wine tasting.

### ***Harvest Moon Gala***

The Harvest Moon Gala, another annual event hosted by the Cumberland Gap Artists Co-op in the fall provides an opportunity for local merchants and artists of Appalachia to show off their work and skills. The event has been going on for the last 5 years, and most booths and activities take place in Festival Park and the Artists Co-op on Colwyn Street.

### ***Victorian Christmas***

Victorian Christmas is an annual event that has been going on for many years in town. The event celebrates the holidays with the arrival of Father Christmas, singing of carols, and lighting of a tree.

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<sup>41</sup> <https://www.lmunet.edu/about-lmu/community/mountain-heritage-literary-festival/>

The event is beloved by residents and visitors and the town expressed a desire to see this event grow with coordination with local merchants, and the LMU choir.

### ***Polar Bear Dip***

The Polar Bear Dip is a New Year's tradition that has been held in Cumberland Gap for the better part of two decades. The event draws in hundreds of spectators and 20 – 40 participants each year who dress in colorful costumes and jump into the Cumberland Gap Creek during one of the chilliest days of the year. Because the Creek comes straight out of the cave, its temperature hovers just under 50 degrees Fahrenheit all year-round. Steam can sometimes be seen rising off the creek on particularly chilly January days as participants take the plunge. The event is sponsored by the Cumberland Gap Fire Department and is covered each year by the station WBIR<sup>42</sup>.

### ***Special Events Committee***

A special events committee could provide the manpower to oversee the coordination and promotion of events throughout the year. This committee could ensure that there is at least one event highlighted each season, and that events are spaced out, so they do not compete for advertising or space. This committee could also research and provide recommendations to the Board of Mayor and Aldermen on the most favorable policies, practices, and regulations, including those for insurance. Finally, this committee could also pursue sponsorships from local, regional, and national businesses or organizations who wish to support, advertise with, or sell services and merchandise at these events.

<sup>42</sup><https://www.wbir.com/article/features/brave-souls-take-frigid-plunge-in-new-years-day-tradition/9938315>

Jonesborough is another town in east Tennessee with a thriving arts community, including makers, creative businesses, and special events. The Town Manager of Jonesborough identifies a thriving arts scene as a key to revitalization and described a similar approach in using a special events committee to identify the key annual events, recommend policies and best-practices, and promote the town's events on an ongoing basis (See **Mentor Communities** section).

### **Underutilized Properties and Commercial Spaces**

In addition to the key assets described above, Cumberland Gap contains several parcels and underutilized structures that could be leveraged for the development of new opportunities in town. These properties comprise approximately 45 of the town's 220 acres. Slope is one major factor in being able to utilize these properties. It can be prohibitively expensive or even impossible to get approved for access roads or development on slopes of 15% grade or steeper. Of those 45 acres identified above, about 25 acres are on a slope or accessed by a slope of 15% or greater. This still leaves about 15 – 20 acres that could potentially be organized to develop future opportunities in the town.

Although the number of commercial establishments have increased in recent years, there are still underutilized commercial spaces in town that present opportunities for new or expanded business. The Cumberland Gap General Store and the Drug Store, both located on Colwyn Street, represent almost 9,000 square ft of underutilized commercial space that could be used to benefit the economy of the town and region.

With the right development that adheres to the vision of the community (see **Vision Statement** section), these properties could contribute significantly to the local and regional economies. Some

of these properties could also play a role in the development of temporary overflow parking for specific time periods and events (see **Temporary and Overflow Parking** Recommendation). The vision and potential use of these properties could be explored during the development of **Zoning/Form Based Code** updates.



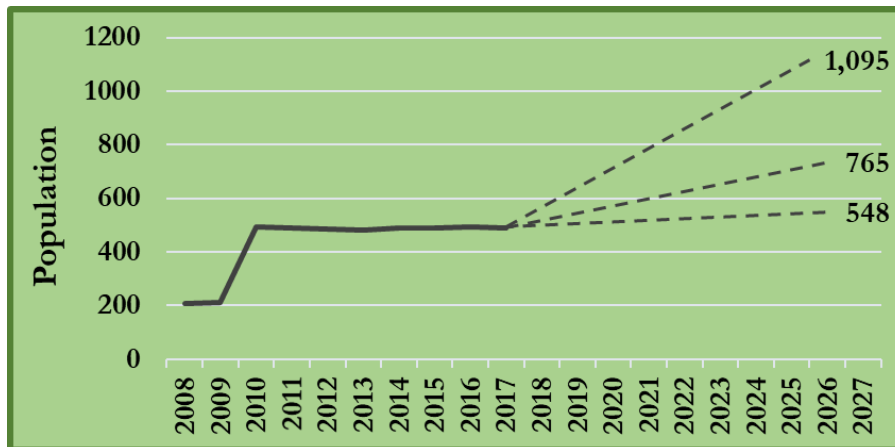
Underutilized properties in Cumberland Gap (shown in red)  
Based on aerial investigation and assessments from the Tennessee Comptroller of the Treasury.

## PROJECTING STEADY GROWTH

Population projections for the Town of Cumberland Gap were generated using a range of growth trends. Factors considered in the development of these projections include:

- Average population growth rates over the past 100 years
- Annual estimated population change from 2008 to 2017<sup>43</sup>
- Survival, birth, and migration rates as provided by the Tennessee Department of Health (TNDOH) and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC)
- Development plans for major institutions affecting growth in the region

Based on these factors, three rates were used to forecast the future population of the community. As illustrated in the graph below, it is projected that Cumberland Gap will continue to grow and will likely see a population of 550 to 1,100 citizens in 2027.



<sup>43</sup> www.census.gov

Factors driving the anticipated growth in Cumberland Gap include the indelible characteristics of the community (see **Key Community Assets** section), as well as historical growth trends, and the projected steady growth for the greater Knoxville Economic Region<sup>44</sup>.

“Cumberland Gap will continue to grow and will likely see a population of 550 to 1,100 citizens by 2027.”



Knoxville Economic Region, East Tennessee Economic Development Agency, [www.eteda.org/regional-profile](http://www.eteda.org/regional-profile), accessed and modified, 6/16/2019

<sup>44</sup> <http://tndata.utk.edu/sdcpopulationprojections.htm>

## COMMUNITY VISION

The first purpose of this effort is to generate a community-based vision and goals for the community of Cumberland Gap. The community vision and goals in this plan were generated with the first-hand input of residents, visitors and elected officials engaged in the planning process.

Efforts to include the community in this plan include focus sessions with a steering committee, a community-wide survey assessment, community listening sessions and public workshops. Following is a brief description of those community involvement efforts.

### Steering Committee

A steering committee was formed early on to provide critical participation and feedback during the planning process. Steering committee participants were selected because they were key decision makers, influencers or business owners in the community. The steering committee was involved in vision casting during an initial meeting, participated in the mentor community visits, and provided review and feedback on written elements of the plan throughout the documentation process. Their feedback was essential to ensuring that the plan was representative of the community's greatest needs.

#### Community Involvement Elements:

- Steering committee focus groups
- Community-wide survey assessment
- Community listening sessions
- Public workshops

## Cumberland Gap Master Plan Survey

In the fall of 2018 and the spring of 2019, a public survey was posted online and distributed at events and public locations in Cumberland Gap to collect feedback for the Cumberland Gap Master Plan and Trailhead Development Plan. The survey asked respondents their opinions regarding existing facilities in Cumberland Gap. The survey also asked respondents about their use of the surrounding trail systems. In total, 150 surveys were filled and collected. Following is a summary of major findings from the survey respondents.

### Cumberland Gap Visitors

Most survey respondents (56%) reported visiting the Town of Cumberland Gap either daily or weekly. Most reported living in either Claiborne County (54%) or Cumberland Gap itself (28%). A small portion reported from Kentucky, mostly from Bell County. A large majority (78%) indicated that their general opinion of Cumberland Gap was “Good” or “Very Good”.

What do you like most about Cumberland Gap?



How could Cumberland Gap be improved?



The most frequently reported reasons for visiting the Gap include Restaurants/Pubs (30%), Parks/Trails (21%), and Festivals/Events (14%). Most respondents (63%) reported that they would like to see more Restaurants/Pubs and more Cultural Activities.

### Cumberland Gap Public Services

Survey respondents were asked to rate the quality of public services provided in Cumberland Gap on a scale of “Very Good” to “Very Poor”. As indicated by the following chart, most participants indicated that all of the services were at least “Adequate”. The services that were rated most often as “Good” or “Very Good” were Parks/Open Spaces, Garbage, and Enforcement/Fire Protection, while those that were rate “Poor” or “Very Poor” most often include Parking, Sidewalks and Utilities.

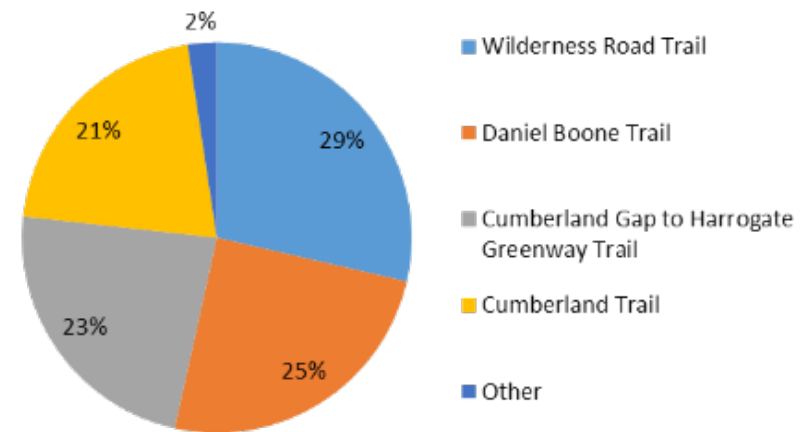
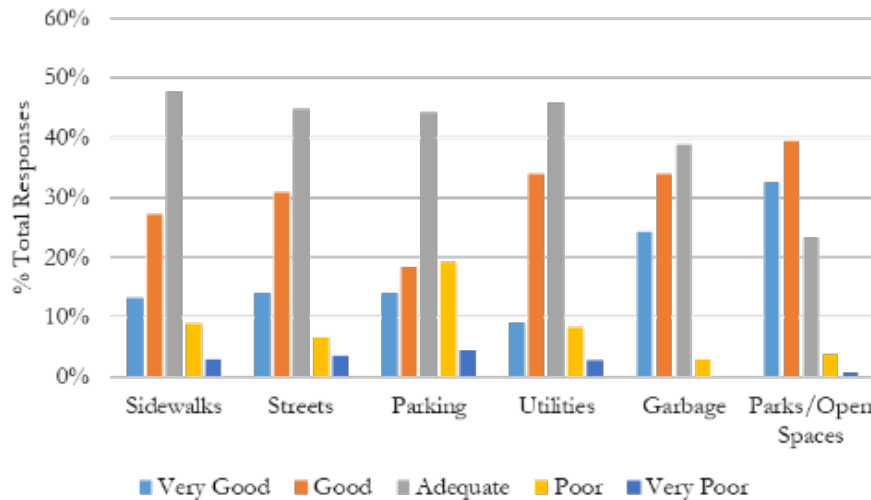
### Trail Users

Most survey respondents (58%) reported that they only use the trail “A few times a year” or less. Only 15% reported using the

trails weekly, and 3% reported using them daily. Trail use was split fairly evenly between the Wilderness Road Trail, Daniel Boone Trail, Cumberland Gap to Harrogate Greenway Trail, and Cumberland Trail. Most respondents reported using the trails for “Walking/Hiking” (84%) for “Recreation” (52%) and Health and Exercise (34%).

### Survey Demographics

63% of survey respondents identified as female, while 37% identified as male. A majority of respondents identified their relationship status as married (61%), while 30% identified as single, and 9% identified as being partnered. Most reported being employed full-time (70%), while 8% reported being employed part-time, 8% reported being a student, 7% reported being retired, and 6% reported being unemployed. Most respondents (71%) reported owning their home, and most households (77%) contained three or fewer individuals. A majority of respondents to the survey reported a household income of \$51,000 or more.



## Public Meetings

### **Community Listening and Visioning Sessions**

Community listening and visioning sessions were held at existing community events and meetings in Cumberland Gap throughout the fall and winter of 2018. At these events, tables were set up and participants were engaged with maps, surveys and open ended question and answer opportunities. Events where these listening sessions took place include the Harvest Moon Festival, LMU's "gathering in the gap" homecoming, and the annual pumpkin lighting. In addition to these events, a special presentation and listening session was held with the Cumberland Gap Merchant's Association. All told, about a third of the surveys were filled and collected during these listening and visioning sessions.

### **Community Workshops**

Over April 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>, open house style public workshops were held at Cumberland Gap Town Hall. Participants were encouraged to drop in anytime during these open houses to discuss elements of the plan with the planning team. Throughout this period, the planning team reviewed information, infographics, and maps illustrating existing conditions, trends, and suggested improvements in Cumberland Gap. Participants were engaged in active discussion and asked to record their responses to some key questions on large note pads. Feedback provided from the meetings is as follows:

### **What is special about Cumberland Gap?**

- History and trails
- A lot of opportunity in downtown Cumberland Gap
- It is a great place to live and visit
- Small town neighbors. Don't want to lose this
- History and natural resources
- CGNHP and potential tourism
- LMU
- Keep the businesses and residents separated

### **What needs improving?**

- Infrastructure – put utilities underground
- Investment
- Diverse demographics
- Insurance policy for special interest
- Respecting residents who live here – let us have the small place we chose
- More places for visitors to stay
- Expand Air B&B
- Overall town landscaping (consistency would be great)
- Better cell service – desperately needed!
- Owners taking care of their property
- Enforce housing codes



### What are future opportunities?

- Tree town designation
- Identify event that makes the area stand out
- Life size buffalo painted by local artists to set around town
- Need Main Street manager
- Town should buy/develop lot on Colwyn
- Mixed use
- Trails – trailhead
- Hot air balloon festival
- Collaboration among CG, LMU, NPS
- Powell river interpretive center
- More music events
- Trail head and Cumberland Trail

### What should Cumberland Gap avoid in the future?

- Don't allow outside forces to take over historic district
- Avoid too many rental properties pushing out residents
- Let LMU work with us not buy us out
- Involve college students but don't let them dictate to residents

### Vision Statement

Drawing on community input received from the surveys, steering committee meetings, listening sessions, and public workshops, the planning team drew up a draft vision statement for the future of Cumberland Gap. This vision statement was shared with the steering committee and they were asked for their consensus on the statement. This statement is meant to be a rallying point to return to during future development

#### Community Vision Statement:

“The town of Cumberland Gap is a charming community surrounded by parks, trails, and historic landmarks. The town will build on these assets to support diverse businesses, accessible & well-marked trails, safe & friendly neighborhoods, and local artists while maintaining the town’s quaint small-town atmosphere.”

This vision was referred to during the development of **Plan Recommendations** and should be referenced during implementation.



## **MENTOR COMMUNITIES**

In the spring of 2019, several communities were visited by a committee of business owners, elected officials and community influencers from Cumberland Gap to discover effective practices and tools for leveraging natural and historic resources to enhance economic development and public health. The communities were selected because they shared common challenges, opportunities or other characteristics with Cumberland Gap. For example, the selected communities are relatively small and surrounded by park land, lie at the intersection of notable trails, or have substantial historically significant characteristics. Further, the selected communities have been recognized for their success at using their natural and historic assets to further their economic development and support public health.

In each community, a panel of local decision makers, business owners, champions and other influencers was assembled, and they were asked to prepare presentations on their community and the strategies developed to take advantage of natural or historic resources. It should be noted here that all three of the towns visited have done an exemplary job in championing their community and they not only welcomed the committee from Cumberland Gap, but freely provided lessons and strategies they had acquired over their years of service. What they provided has the potential to impact Cumberland Gap for years to come.

What follows is a brief introduction to the three communities visited and the lessons learned from them. A full summary of the mentor community visits and key lessons is included in Appendix B – Mentor Community Lessons White Paper.

### **Banner Elk**

Banner Elk, with a population of about 950 citizens, is located in Western North Carolina and, like Cumberland Gap, is surrounded by mountains, parks and forest that provide an abundance of outdoor recreation activities including skiing, golfing, hiking, horseback riding, rafting, and fishing.

### **Damascus**


Damascus is a name that has become associated with trails. The Town, with 790 residents located in Southwest Virginia, draws in tens of thousands of visitors each year to use and celebrate the Appalachian Trail and Virginia Creeper Trail which pass through the heart of Town.

### **Jonesborough**

Jonesborough is a town of 5,400 citizens located in East Tennessee. The Town was founded in 1779, 17 years before the founding of the State, and has done much to preserve its heritage while maintaining events and services that continue to make the Town attractive to visitors and residents alike.

### **Lessons Learned**

No two communities are exactly alike, and many of the strategies developed by Banner Elk, Damascus, and Jonesborough are directly linked to their unique challenges and opportunities and could not be replicated in the same manner in Cumberland Gap. However, all three communities provide inspiration and valuable lessons that could benefit Cumberland Gap as it prepares for future challenges and opportunities. In considering the lessons provided by the three mentor communities, several major themes arise.



The first is the use of State and National programs that support preservation of historic and natural assets. Programs such as Certified Local Governments, the National Main Street initiative, as well as those provided by regional and national trail conservancies provide valuable technical training and grant resources to the mentor communities and could be of great use in Cumberland Gap.

The second theme is the high priority given to non-motorized safety and connectivity. The mentor communities recognize that building foot traffic is an effective way to generate a positive brand for their community while increasing retail activity and the associated employment opportunities.

The third theme is the value of proactively supporting partnerships at the local and regional levels. Town officials from all three communities shared that some of the most impactful fundraising, programming and development activities come from frequent communication and sharing of resources both within and between jurisdictions.

The fourth theme is the use of marketing tools to proactively champion the community and region to potential visitors and investors. By incorporating even small sums for advertising into the local budget, leveraging advertising funding through grants, and hiring for positions that can promote local and regional assets, the mentor communities have benefited greatly from proactive marketing.

The fifth theme is the development of non-profit organizations under the jurisdiction of the town to support fundraising and development efforts for specific areas of interest. Because non-profits can pursue a wide range of funding sources and develop

partnerships with outside organizations, they add valuable bandwidth to the mentor communities' development efforts.

The lessons and strategies provided by the mentor communities are invaluable and should be carefully considered as Cumberland Gap takes future steps to support the local economy, improve quality of life and ultimately enhance public health in the town and surrounding region.

Major themes in the lessons provided by the mentor communities include:

1. Make use of State and Federal programs that support natural and historic preservation
2. Prioritize non-motorized safety and connectivity
3. Support partnerships at the local and regional level
4. Use marketing tools to proactively champion the community
5. Develop a non-profit organization to expand bandwidth of development efforts

## PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

The original goal for this project, as developed in collaboration with the funding agency, was to develop a vision and priorities for facilities, policies, and initiatives that support public health and the local economy of Cumberland Gap and northern Claiborne County. To that end, the following list of recommended policies and initiatives and facilities was developed, reviewed by the steering committee and presented to the Board of Mayor and Aldermen for feedback and comments before finalizing.

Alone, none of these recommendations is intended as a panacea for Cumberland Gap but combined could pave the way for encouraging public and private investments in Cumberland Gap that support the local economy, promote public health, and protect the area's bounty of natural resources.

## POLICIES AND INITIATIVES

### #1 – Allocate Marketing Fund

Even a small fund allocated towards marketing and economic development could have a ripple effect in promoting the town, its businesses, and the region. This fund could be used to leverage grants at the regional, state and national levels. Marketing funds could be targeted towards the following initiatives:

- Update the town's website and establish social media campaigns to reflect the assets documented in this master plan effort
- Develop trail town logo and branding materials
- Develop/disseminate marketing materials that highlight local artists and makers



Conceptual Cumberland Gap Trail Town Logo

- Generate and promote a video on Boone Trace and its connection in Cumberland Gap as outlined in the 2018 “Boone Trace Master Plan for Kentucky”
- Carry out many of the tasks highlighted in the 2009 “Appalachian Gateway Communities Initiative” Tourism Report as highlighted in this master plan

Completing these efforts may require the town to use some of these funds to hire part-time marketing staff. Cumberland Gap should open discussions with nearby jurisdictions who may be interested in pooling funds for hiring such marketing/economic development staff for the region.

## #2 – Establish Special Events Committee

A special events committee created by ordinance could meet periodically to provide guidance, promotion and coordination of local events. The committee would be structured as a 5 – 6-person ad-hoc organization with 1 – 2 members being from the body of aldermen, 1 – 2 from the public at large, and 1 – 2 from Lincoln Memorial University. By limiting its size, and making its membership ad-hoc rather than elected or appointed, the committee would remain nimble and responsive to the changing needs and perspectives of the community. Responsibilities of this group could include:

- General advice to the Board on events and activities
- Provide strategic direction for future events and activities
- Review of event applications
- Oversight relative to the insurance requirements, permits, code issues, etc.
- Promote special events in coordination with the Town

As part of the planning process, the planning team developed a resolution for the town to pass setting their intention to develop a special events committee and outlining the responsibilities of that committee. The Mayor of Cumberland Gap has also been in active discussions with MTAS to develop an ordinance for a special events committee in the community. Establishing the committee under ordinance would codify the organization and its role in the community. It is recommended that Cumberland Gap continue working on the development of a special events committee through ordinance to carry out the responsibilities listed above in support of the town's special events and activities.


## #3 – Welcome Events for LMU Students/Staff

Welcome events organized around the beginning of the school year or semester could provide an opportunity for LMU students, staff, and faculty an opportunity to interact with the residents and businesses of Cumberland Gap and provide them with a sense of ownership or belonging in the community. A number of these events and tools were illustrated by the mentor communities (See **Mentor Communities** section). Some of these events and tools include:

- Placement of banners on utility poles and street furniture, welcoming LMU students, staff, and faculty
- Packet of Cumberland Gap business coupons and marketing materials provided to students, staff, and faculty at the beginning of the year or semester
- Picnic event in Cumberland Gap, where students are provided with vouchers for food business and vendors in Cumberland Gap and a large area is open for eating and interacting

## #4 – LMU Internship/Volunteer Programs

Several of the initiatives and recommendations in this plan could benefit from and may even require additional manpower for research, writing applications, and developing policies and programs. Implementing efforts such as the **Certified Local Gov & TN Main Streets** programs, developing and carrying out targeted marketing campaigns, leveraging the efforts of the **Special Events Committee**, and coordinating with other jurisdictions in the region are all efforts that could use additional manpower. In turn, formalized internship and volunteer programs could provide LMU students with for credit or non-credit experiential learning opportunities. Early discussions between the



Mayor of Cumberland Gap and deans of various schools at LMU have already begun towards the development of such formalized programs. The Dean for the School of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences has expressed interest in making the most of the experiential learning opportunities in Cumberland Gap, and has requested short descriptions of project goals and learning objectives around which to tailor internship or even class-oriented learning programs that could provide service to Cumberland Gap.

#### **#5 – Regular LMU Speaking Engagement**

A regular speaking engagement for the Mayor, Board, and/or business owners in Cumberland Gap could provide the opportunity to introduce the town and its businesses, as well as any **LMU Internship/Volunteer Programs** to LMU students, staff, and faculty. These speaking engagements could be organized around commencement, graduation, or other major school events to reach a large portion of the LMU body.

#### **#6 – Certified Local Gov & TN Main Streets**

There are several grants, marketing opportunities, trainings, and forms of development guidance that are available to communities that participate in specific programs. Certified Local Governments and Tennessee Main Streets are two such programs. The successful use of these programs was well illustrated by the mentor communities (See **Mentor Communities** section).

The Certified Local Governments administered jointly by the Tennessee Historical Commission (THC) and the National Park Service works across local, State, and Federal levels of government to encourage commitment to the preservation of historic cultural

resources. Communities certified under the Certified Local Government program benefit from annual appropriations through the Federal Historic Preservation Fund and technical assistance from the National Park Service and State Historic Preservation Offices with surveys, preservation efforts, and programs with social, economic and environmental benefits.

To become a Certified Local Government, a community must establish a local historic preservation commission, survey and inventory local historic resources, enforce protection of historic properties through ordinance or other legal measures, facilitate local participation including involvement in the National Register listing process, and carry out other responsibilities delegated under the National Historic Preservation Act. To move forward with the certification process, a community should begin by reaching out to the Certified Local Government Coordinator, at the Tennessee Historical Commission<sup>45</sup>

The Tennessee Main Street program is part of the larger National Main Street Center and the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The program provides designated communities with a structured approach and resources for redeveloping and strengthening their downtown through design, economic restructuring, promotion and organizational improvements. This combined approach has seen considerable results over the years. From 1980 through 2018, the cumulative economic impact of the program has resulted in almost \$80 billion dollars reinvested and over 640,000 jobs generated in local communities nationwide<sup>46</sup>. Becoming Tennessee Main Street-designated requires the establishment of a non-profit with a paid executive director to manage the local program and establishing a strong network of

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<sup>45</sup><http://www.tennesseepreservationtrust.org/resources/thc-certified-local-governments>

<sup>46</sup> <https://www.mainstreet.org/mainstreetimpact>



local private and public sector organizations to work with Tennessee Main Streets Program Director.

**Internship/Volunteer Programs** established through structured programs with LMU could provide enhanced capacity for both programs.

#### **#7 – Establish 501(C)(3) Non-Profit**

A 501(c)(3) non-profit organization working in partnership with the Board of Mayor and Aldermen would provide the town with the opportunity to fundraise, pursue grants, negotiate favorable prices, promote the area, and pursue opportunities otherwise unavailable to a local government. The mentor communities provide several examples of successful uses of these organizations (See **Mentor Communities** section). Setting up a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization can take a substantial effort. Through **Internship/Volunteer Programs**, staff and students from LMU’s Duncan School of Law and School of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences could aid the Mayor and Board with development of such an organization. Discussions with LMU on this matter have already begun and should be continued.

#### **#8 – Revisit Zoning/Form Based Code**

Zoning is a tool for communities to influence development that occurs within their boundaries, as well as to ensure compatibility of neighboring land uses. Over the years, development patterns and the needs of the community have changed. Cumberland Gap’s zoning has responded to these changes over the years with amendments, additions, and revisions, some of which have made the requirements and guidelines cumbersome or difficult to understand and use. Considering the changes in the community and the opportunities for future development, Cumberland Gap’s zoning codes should be reviewed with the goal of making them

more effective and easier to understand. Through **Internship/Volunteer Programs**, students from LMU’s law school and Masters in Public Administration could aid the Mayor and Board with reviewing existing zoning regulations and providing recommended revisions based on model codes and best practices.

Part of this effort should also include the use of a form-based code in Cumberland Gap. Form-based codes can replace or overlay existing zoning and provide guidelines for the design and form of buildings, roadways, and public spaces in Cumberland Gap. Currently, Cumberland Gap’s historic district includes approximately 14 acres in which very specific design guidelines and use restrictions are required for historic preservation. By creating a form-based code, the town could expand similar design guidelines throughout the town’s entire jurisdiction. In addition, a form-based code could bring design guidelines for buildings, public spaces, and right-of-way under one umbrella. Finally, a form-based code would provide a focus on the design, or “look and feel”, of buildings and spaces while allowing the flexibility to use those spaces for a wider array of functions and activities. It is important that the community is understanding and supportive of this effort. The town should therefore begin the effort with an intensive involvement process that asks community residents for their preferences and endeavors to reach consensus on design and development goals. For example, such an outreach effort may seek to answer whether the community wishes to replace existing zoning with form-based codes in part or all of town, or instead use

form-based codes as an overlay to existing zoning in order to keep existing use restrictions and guidelines.<sup>47</sup>

### **#9 – Regional Vision for Trails/Trailheads**

A shared regional vision for trails and trailheads in northern Claiborne County and the greater Cumberland Gap region could help the community cultivate opportunities for marketing, fundraising, and acquiring other resources for those trails. A vision statement and associated pictures and graphics that illustrate that vision could provide clarity to potential funders and supporters of the trails and improve efforts to seek local, state and federal funds for improvements to the trails and trailheads

This vision could include a community based discussion on the types of activities and events it wishes to support on the trails. It could also include a prioritized list of missing connections between trails and paths in the region, policies and best practices for the participating jurisdictions, and explore the types of businesses that could support use of the trails for recreation and active transportation throughout northern Claiborne County and beyond<sup>48</sup>.

### **#10 – Promotions through GET Associations**

The section of the Great Eastern Trail (GET) that runs through Tennessee is being developed collaboratively by the Cumberland Trail Conference<sup>49</sup>, Southeastern Foot Trails Coalition (SEFTC)<sup>50</sup>, and the American Hiking Society<sup>51</sup>. As the northern terminus of the Cumberland Trail, Cumberland Gap is an important waypoint along the GET as it runs through Tennessee. Communication and promotions shared between Cumberland Gap and these

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<sup>47</sup> <https://formbasedcodes.org>

<sup>48</sup> *Small Town and Rural Multimodal Networks*, Federal Highway Administration, Dec, 2016

associations through their websites and other forms of communication could have long term benefits for both trail users and the town.

Establishing a **Marketing Fund** and developing **Internship/Volunteer Programs** could assist greatly with these efforts.

### **#11 – Conduct Retail Leakage Study**

As business opportunities in the town of Cumberland Gap continue to develop, the town may want to consider taking a more active role in identifying and recruitment of businesses that could have the greatest impact on the economy and public health of the town and region. A retail leakage study compares the retail expenditures by residents in an area with the retail sales produced by establishments in the same area. The difference between these two factors represents the demand for goods or services that are not provided in the area and therefore consumer spending that is “leaking” out of the community. Such a study is being used to encourage business diversity in the similarly sized and situated town of Damascus, Virginia (See **Mentor Communities** section). Due to the proximity of goods and services in the nearby jurisdictions of Harrogate, TN and Middlesboro, KY, Cumberland Gap should reach out to these jurisdictions for participation in a leakage study that assesses the retail goods and services in all three communities.

### **#12 – Continued LMU/NPS Strategic Planning**

Discussions between the Mayor of Cumberland Gap and both Lincoln Memorial University and the National Park Service have

<sup>49</sup> <http://www.cumberlandtrail.org/>

<sup>50</sup> <https://southeasternfoottrailscoalition.org/>

<sup>51</sup> <http://www.americanhiking.org/>



been developed through this process. The Mayor and the acting superintendent of the Cumberland Gap National Historical Park were recently invited to attend Lincoln Memorial University's annual strategic planning retreat. This retreat allowed them to establish new connections and set times for future conversations and meetings to discuss opportunities for collaboration between the town and university. Communication between the Mayor and members of the LMU board of directors as well as deans of various programs have ensued, including ongoing discussions around potential **Internship/Volunteer Programs** and LMU's active participation on a Cumberland Gap **Special Events Committee**. The planning team has worked with these entities to develop strategic questions for these discussions. The Mayor and Board should continue with these targeted and strategic discussions with LMU to develop resources to support the town's future development.



Dr. Wright, LMU's Vice President for Academic Services, discusses opportunities at the Cumberland Gap Master Plan Workshops in April

<sup>52</sup> <https://walkyourcity.org>

## FACILITIES

### **#13 –Short-Term and Long-Term Wayfinding**

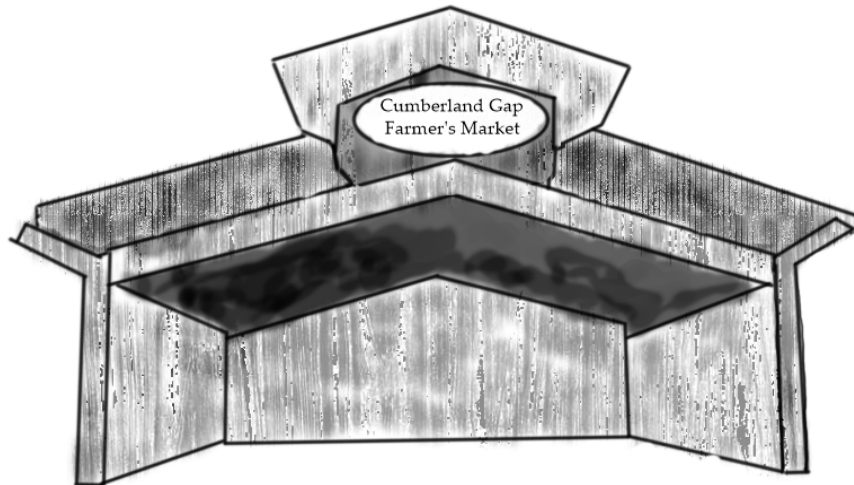
The walkability and bike-ability of Cumberland Gap and northern Claiborne County is an asset for business development and public health of the community. Physical activity is important to cardiovascular health. Those who walk or bike are also much more likely to stop into local businesses and institutions to interact and make purchases. These aspects of the community can be reinforced with wayfinding and signage that lets residents and visitors know where they are and how to navigate safely to businesses, trailheads, and neighborhoods. Over recent years, tools have been developed that can provide low-cost solutions for wayfinding. The Walk Your City toolkit is one such example. The toolkit provides the steps to develop a grassroots campaign of pedestrian and bike wayfinding including signage that indicates the distance, in minutes, to everyday amenities and connects to mobile applications<sup>52</sup>.

Over the long-term, the community may want to consider conducting a wayfinding study to identify the routes that are most popular or which pass to and from popular destinations in the town and region and generate signs, maps, and web-based materials that help navigate those routes. If combined with wayfinding through nearby jurisdictions, this type of study could also be an effective way to contribute to a **Regional Vision for Trails/Trailheads**. Cumberland Gap could work with consultants or look for assistance from the East Tennessee Community Design Center for this task.

### **#14 – Estep Property**

The Estep Property located in the heart of the commercial area of town just steps from the Iron Furnace trailhead provides key opportunities for the town to promote itself and provide amenities for both locals and visitors of the trails. The town should strongly consider purchasing this property so that the Board and town residents can provide the direction for its future development.

Short-term uses of the property could begin developing traffic and revenue for the site as the town seeks tenants and investors for longer-term uses on the property. Short-term uses discussed during the planning process include a farmer’s market located on the site and providing opportunities for residents and visitors to purchase fresh produce and local goods sold by vendors. Another potential shorter-term use is as a venue for performances and other activities. Longer-term uses discussed for the property could include mixed use developments that include both housing and commerce, as well as a larger, fixed venue for performances and



Conceptual Farmer's Market Stage/Pavilion

activities. Regardless of how the property is developed, having the property under the ownership of the town will ensure that its short and longer term uses fully take into consideration the needs of the public. Finally, development of this property should be an important consideration as the town pursues an update to its **Zoning/Form Based Code**. The use restrictions and form-based directives of the updated zoning could dictate not only what types of uses are developed on the property, but also the size and design of buildings and how they interact with surrounding properties.

### **#15 – Establish New Water Source**

Cumberland Gap is currently provided all its water through contracts with LMU. LMU acquires the water it provides to the town from the freshwater springs coming out of the Cumberland Gap Cave and from the Arthur-Shawanee Utility District located in Harrogate. Over the years, prices for water provided to Cumberland Gap have remained at or below the statewide average prices. However, water prices cannot be guaranteed in the future and the town does not have a backup water source in case of emergency.

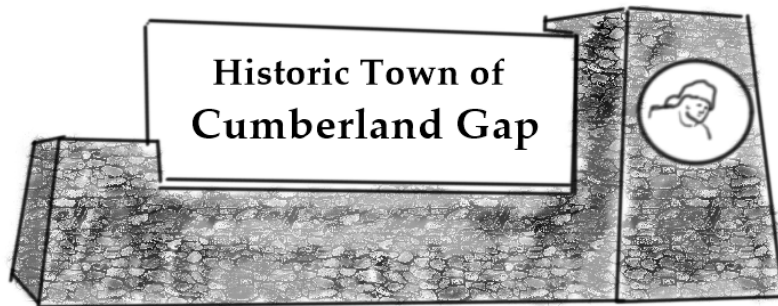
Developing a new water source for the town will allow the town to supplement its current supply of water provided by LMU and provide another source in case of emergencies. Having its own supply for at least some of its water could also make Cumberland Gap a more desirable place for investors who will be looking at the security of utilities and other public services in their calculations to invest.

The Mayor has been in ongoing discussions regarding a water tower and well near the northeast corner of town. Initial tests have begun as to the viability of the water source in that location, the types of localized treatment available and the condition of existing

storage for the local water source. These investigations should continue with the goal of laying the groundwork for its potential development.

### **#16 – Signage on Harrogate and NPS Property**

As noted in the **Community Need** section of the plan, the Cumberland Gap Tunnel and the rerouting of highway 25E into its current configuration had a major impact on the town’s economy. One must now navigate several ramps and turns to access the town, and major signage indicating the location and assets of the town are lacking. One of the challenges with establishing appropriate signage is that the town is surrounded by National Park and town of Harrogate properties. The town should work with these entities to identify locations and specifications for signage that indicates the location of the town and gives a feel for what the town has to offer. Signage that integrates with the signs produced for the National Historical Park could help address this. As a new superintendent is brought onboard with the Cumberland Gap National Historical Park, the town of Cumberland Gap should reach out for strategic discussions on the potential location and design of such signage. In addition to signage, the town should work with property owners to develop landscape enhancements



Conceptual Cumberland Gap Signage

such as split rail fencing along the highways near Cumberland Gap to enhance the feeling of entering a “place” as you near the town.

### **#17 – Install Bicycle Racks and Repair Stations**

One way to make the assets in Cumberland Gap and northern Claiborne County feel more accessible for exercise and non-motorized travel is to install stations for safely locking and repairing bicycles at regular intervals and key waypoints on established bike routes. Installing bicycle racks and repair stations at key locations, such as next to Katlyn DeVries Dog Park, just as you exit the tunnel on the Cumberland Gap to LMU greenway, and at the Iron Furnace trailhead could provide a sense that the town welcomes visitors to its businesses and trail to arrive by bicycle.

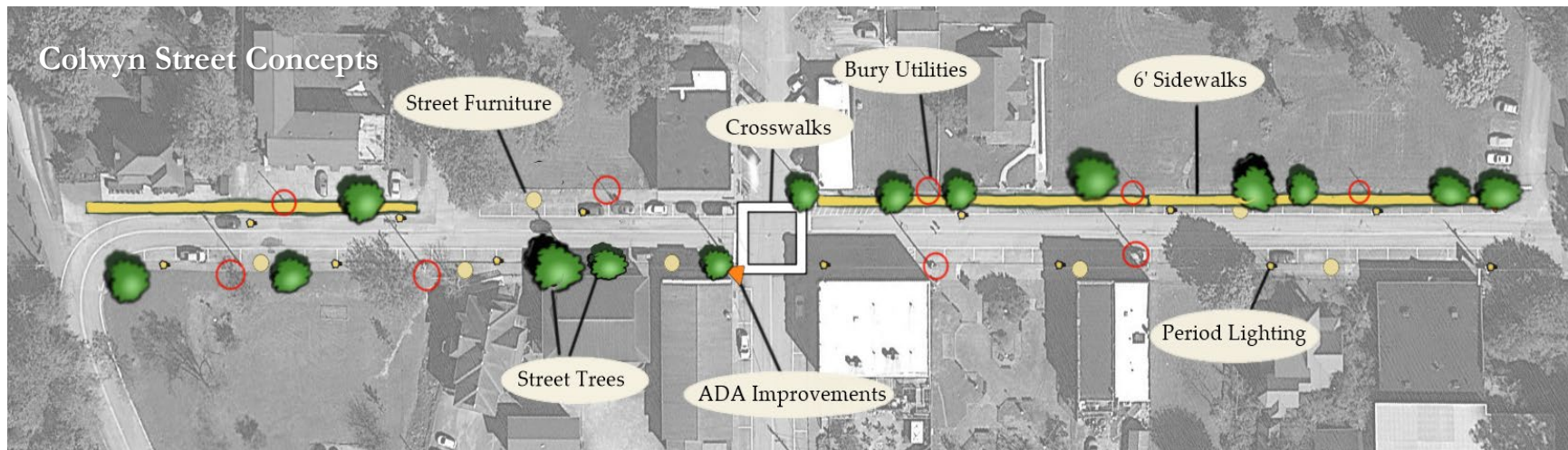
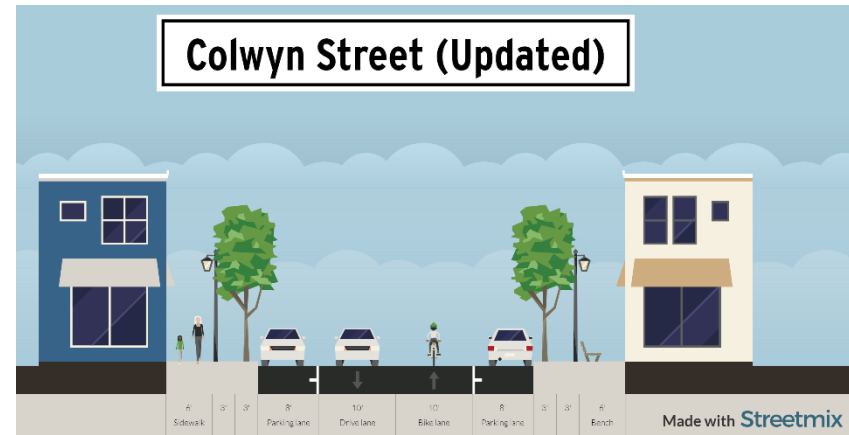
### **#18 – Temporary and Overflow Parking**

During special events and busier times throughout the year, the town often finds itself challenged to provide sufficient on and off-street parking for residents, businesses, and visitors. With the development and use of the Estep property, and the completion of the Cumberland Trail and Great Eastern Trail (GET), those parking demands may increase, putting further strain on existing available parking. Cumberland Gap should work to alleviate this strain by installing additional parking on key properties in town. Some ideas for this parking development include development of parking on portions of privately-owned lots that were identified as being underutilized. Discussions on access and development of parking on LMU properties can be part of ongoing **Continued LMU/NPS Strategic Planning** between the two entities.

## #19 – Streetscape Improvement Pilot Project

When local government invests in improvements to public facilities, it demonstrates that the community cares for itself and its future. In turn, investors are much more likely to spend on new business ideas or facilities. In this way, private investment often follows public investment. Streets are public facilities that are used by a community for many activities including, but not limited to, motor vehicle travel. They accommodate pedestrian and bicycle travel, provide spaces for recreation and exercise, interface with buildings and businesses, and provide public spaces for community events throughout the year. The term “Streetscape” refers to the road cross section, traffic conditions, sidewalk conditions, street furniture, landscaping, building fronts, and signage along a street. By improving the streetscape, the town can demonstrate that it is a good place to both invest and live. The town should begin with a pilot project along a block or intersection to demonstrate a series of streetscape improvements, including burying utilities, widening sidewalks, installing street trees and placing sidewalk furniture. Many of these elements were illustrated to the community with

graphics during the town workshops. Resources for the development of these types of improvements are available through several grants, including those under TDOT, USDA, ARC, and CDBG. Most of these grants require a match. Cumberland Gap should consider approaching LMU about developing this pilot project alongside LMU properties and working with the University to leverage funds needed for this match.



## RESOURCES AND NEXT STEPS

The table below provides resources and next steps for the effective implementation of the recommendations described above.

## POLICIES AND INITIATIVES

RECOMMENDED STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION	RESOURCES	NEXT STEPS
<b>ALLOCATE MARKETING FUND</b>	Even a small fund allocated towards marketing and economic development could have a ripple effect in promoting the town, its businesses, and the region.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <a href="#">EDA Planning Funds</a></li> <li>2. <a href="#">USRDA grants and loans</a></li> <li>3. <a href="#">TN ECD Asset Enhancement Grants</a></li> <li>4. <a href="#">TN Dept. of Health Grants</a></li> <li>5. See <b>Mentor Community White Paper</b> for examples</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Allocate small annual fund from Town budget for marketing</li> <li>2. Open discussions with Claiborne County, the Claiborne County Tourism Commission, and the City of Harrogate on pooling funds for hiring marketing/economic development staff for the region.</li> <li>3. Apply for State and National Grants to leverage marketing fund (See <b>Resources</b>)</li> </ol>
<b>ESTABLISH SPECIAL EVENTS COMMITTEE</b>	A special events committee created by resolution or ordinance could meet periodically to provide guidance, promotion and coordination for local events.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <a href="#">MTAS</a> Special Events Committee Resources</li> <li>2. LMU Faculty and Staff from the School of Arts, Humanities &amp; Social Sciences</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Work with MTAS to develop Ordinance for establishing Special Events Committee.</li> <li>2. Coordinate with LMU</li> <li>3. Establish list of official community events held each year, as outlined in this report.</li> </ol>
<b>WELCOME EVENTS FOR LMU STUDENTS/ STAFF</b>	Welcome events organized around the beginning of the school year or semester could provide an opportunity for LMU students, staff, and faculty to interact with the residents and businesses of Cumberland Gap and provide them with a sense of ownership or belonging in the community.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A number of these events and tools were illustrated by the mentor communities (See <b>Mentor Communities White Paper</b>).</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Coordinate with LMU to take place during new student orientation and special events.</li> </ol>

RECOMMENDED STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION	RESOURCES	NEXT STEPS
<b>LMU INTERNSHIP/ VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS</b>	Several of the initiatives and recommendations in this plan could benefit from and may even require additional manpower for research, writing applications, and developing policies and programs.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. LMU Faculty and Staff</li> <li>2. Use <a href="#">EPIC Network</a> resources to guide relationship with LMU</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Establish specific internship programs with goals and outcomes with LMU Faculty and Staff</li> <li>2. Continue working with contacts from the LMU School of Arts, Humanities &amp; Social Sciences, and the Duncan School of Law</li> </ol>
<b>REGULAR LMU SPEAKING ENGAGEMENT</b>	A regular speaking engagement for the Mayor, Board, and/or business owners in Cumberland Gap could provide the opportunity to introduce the town and its businesses, as well as any Internship/Volunteer Programs to LMU students, staff, and faculty.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. LMU Faculty and Staff</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Continue working with contacts from the LMU School of Arts, Humanities &amp; Social Sciences, and the Duncan School of Law</li> </ol>
<b>ESTABLISH 501(C)(3) NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION</b>	A 501(c)3 non-profit organization under a cooperative relationship with the Board of Mayor and Aldermen would provide the town with the opportunity to fundraise, pursue grants, negotiate favorable prices, promote the area, and pursue opportunities otherwise unavailable to a local government.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <a href="#">National Council of Non-Profits</a></li> <li>2. LMU School of Arts, Humanities &amp; Social Sciences</li> <li>3. LMU Duncan School of Law</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Determine the identify of a potential 501(c)(3) non-profit</li> <li>2. Work with LMU staff/students to submit IRS documentation.</li> </ol>
<b>CERTIFIED LOCAL GOV &amp; TN MAIN STREETS</b>	Work to achieve <a href="#">TN Main Street Certification</a> and <a href="#">Certified Local Government</a> status.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Interns and volunteers solicited through structured programs with LMU could provide capacity for both programs.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Continue working with contacts from the LMU School of Arts, Humanities &amp; Social Sciences, and the Duncan School of Law</li> </ol>

RECOMMENDED STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION	RESOURCES	NEXT STEPS
<b>REVISIT ZONING/FORM-BASED CODE</b>	Considering the changes in the community and the opportunities for future development, Cumberland Gap’s zoning codes should be reviewed with the goal of making them more effective and easier to understand. Part of this effort should also include the use of a form-based code in Cumberland Gap.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. LMU Duncan School of Law</li> <li>2. <a href="#">Form Based Code Institute</a></li> <li>3. <a href="#">East TN Development District</a></li> <li>4. <a href="#">MTAS</a></li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Cumberland Gap Planning Commission should submit a request to the Board of Mayor and Aldermen asking for direction by resolution to pursue an updated code review.</li> <li>2. The town should also consider a limited services agreement with the East TN Development District for guidance and technical assistance with the update.</li> </ol>
<b>REGIONAL VISION FOR TRAILS/TRAILHEADS</b>	A shared regional vision for trails and trailheads in northern Claiborne County and the greater Cumberland Gap region could help the community cultivate opportunities for marketing, fundraising, and acquiring other resources for those trails.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <a href="#">Small Town and Rural Multimodal Networks</a>, Federal Highway Administration, Dec, 2016</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Convene with the County Mayor, the National Park Service, the cities of Cumberland Gap and Harrogate, and the East TN North RPO to create a committee and structure for the promotion of multimodal opportunities in Claiborne County.</li> <li>2. Generate maps and goals for existing and future trails and trailheads in northern Claiborne County.</li> </ol>
<b>PROMOTIONS THROUGH GET ASSOCIATIONS</b>	Communication and promotions shared between Cumberland Gap and the Great Eastern Trail associations through their websites and other forms of communication could have long term benefits for both trail users and the town.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Establishing an allocated marketing fund and developing structured internship and volunteer programs could assist greatly with these efforts.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Position Cumberland Gap as a major “trail town” through continued communication with the Park Manager and Program Coordinator of the Cumberland Trail State Park.</li> <li>2. Develop white paper on Cumberland Gap to present to the board of the Cumberland Trail Conference (CTC).</li> </ol>

RECOMMENDED STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION	RESOURCES	NEXT STEPS
<b>CONDUCT RETAIL LEAKAGE STUDY</b>	<p>As business opportunities in the town of Cumberland Gap continue to develop, the town may want to consider taking a more active role in identifying and recruitment of businesses that could have the greatest impact on the economy and public health of the town and region.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <a href="#">East TN Development District</a></li> <li>2. <a href="#">Municipal Technical Advisory Service</a></li> <li>3. Such a study is being used to encourage business diversity in the similarly sized and situated town of Damascus, Virginia (See <b>Mentor Community White Paper</b>).</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Coordinate with the Mayor's of Middlesboro, Harrogate, and Claiborne County on the prospect of a joint retail leakage study.</li> <li>2. Identify trade area for leakage study</li> <li>3. Reach out to the East TN Development District and Municipal Technical Advisory Service for aid and resources for developing a retail leakage study.</li> </ol>
<b>CONTINUED LMU/NPS STRATEGIC PLANNING</b>	<p>Communication between the Mayor and members of the LMU board of directors as well as deans of various programs should be used to structure internship and volunteer programs, solicit LMU's active participation on a Cumberland Gap Special Events Committee, and support the town's future development.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. LMU Faculty and Staff</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Attend future annual strategic planning meetings with LMU and the NPS.</li> </ol>



## FACILITIES

RECOMMENDED STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION	RESOURCES	NEXT STEPS
<b>SHORT-TERM AND LONG-TERM WAYFINDING</b>	Cumberland Gap should develop wayfinding and signage that lets residents and visitors know where they are and how to navigate safely to businesses, trailheads, and neighborhoods.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <a href="#">Walk Your City</a></li> <li>2. <a href="#">TN ECD Asset Enhancement Grants</a></li> <li>3. <a href="#">EDA Planning Funds</a></li> <li>4. <a href="#">TN Dept. of Health Grants</a></li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Allocate funding and solicit volunteers for grassroots short-term wayfinding campaign</li> <li>2. Pursue grant funding as request for applications are announced</li> </ol>
<b>ESTEP PROPERTY</b>	The Estep Property, located in the heart of town just steps from the Iron Furnace trailhead, provides key opportunities for the town to promote itself and provide amenities for both locals and visitors of the trails. The town should strongly consider purchasing the property so that the Board and town residents can provide direction for its future development.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <a href="#">USRDA grants and loans</a></li> <li>2. <a href="#">Tennessee Municipal League Bond Pool</a></li> <li>3. Local banking institutions for conventional loans</li> <li>4. Municipal Bonds</li> </ol>	<p>3 Options:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Purchase property using local funds or conventional financing.</li> <li>2. Determine community use for property and apply for grants or loans described under Resources.</li> <li>3. Place restrictive covenants on property and release a request for proposals to potential developers, letting the market decide the highest and best use for the property within the restriction of those covenants</li> </ol>
<b>ESTABLISH NEW WATER SOURCE</b>	Developing a new water source for the town will allow the town to supplement its current supply of water provided by LMU and provide another source in case of emergencies. Having its own supply for at least some of its water could also make Cumberland Gap a more desirable place for investors who will be looking at the security of utilities and other public services in their calculations to invest.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <a href="#">USDA Grants and Loans</a></li> <li>2. <a href="#">CDBG Grants</a></li> <li>3. <a href="#">TDEC Clean Water State Revolving Fund</a></li> <li>4. <a href="#">TDEC Drinking Water State Revolving Fund</a></li> <li>5. <a href="#">ARC Community Infrastructure Grants</a></li> <li>6. <a href="#">TN Dept. of Health Grants</a></li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Work with engineers, the development district, and consultants to fully assess the viability of water source and treatment methods</li> <li>2. Work with engineers, the development district, and consultants to determine the best strategy for funding</li> <li>3. Grants and loans for development of water source have varying application submittal dates and fund availability (See <b>Resources</b>)</li> </ol>

RECOMMENDED STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION	RESOURCES	NEXT STEPS
<b>SIGNAGE ON HARROGATE AND NPS PROPERTY</b>	The town of Cumberland Gap should reach out for strategic discussions on the location and specifications for signage and landscape enhancements that indicate the location of the town and gives a feel for what the town has to offer.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <a href="#">TN ECD Asset Enhancement Grants</a></li> <li>2. <a href="#">TN Dept. of Health Grants</a></li> <li>3. <a href="#">USRDA grants and loans</a></li> <li>4. <a href="#">National Park Service</a></li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Reach a decision with the National Park Service and City of Harrogate on the location for entranceway signage.</li> <li>2. Seek funding for design and development of signage (See <b>Resources</b>)</li> <li>3. Work with the East TN Community Design Center or Consultants on design and construction of signage</li> </ol>
<b>INSTALL BICYCLE RACKS AND REPAIR STATIONS</b>	Installing bicycle racks and repair stations at key locations to encourage bicycling and walking to access businesses and trails in Cumberland Gap.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <a href="#">People for Bikes Infrastructure Grants</a></li> <li>2. <a href="#">Park Tool Community Grant Program</a></li> <li>3. <a href="#">Jeff Roth Cycling Foundation</a></li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Determine the best locations for bicycle racks and repair stations</li> <li>2. Apply for grant funding for developing infrastructure (See <b>Resources</b>)</li> </ol>
<b>TEMPORARY &amp; OVERFLOW PARKING DEVELOPMENT</b>	Access and development of parking on LMU, public and private properties can be used to provide temporary and overflow parking to support events and businesses in town.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. LMU and public/private undeveloped properties (see <b>Underutilized Properties and Commercial Spaces</b>).</li> <li>2. <a href="#">MTAS</a></li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Designate suitable properties and approach owners</li> <li>4. Work with MTAS to produce a hold-harmless temporary agreement with those property owners</li> </ol>
<b>STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENT PILOT PROJECT</b>	Practitioners have often found that private investment follows public investment in redevelopment. Cumberland Gap should invest in improvements to its streetscapes to demonstrate that the town is a good place to invest and live. The town should begin with a pilot project along a block or intersection to demonstrate a series of streetscape improvements, including burying utilities, widening sidewalks, installing street trees and placing sidewalk furniture.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <a href="#">TDOT Grants</a></li> <li>2. <a href="#">USRDA grants and loans</a></li> <li>3. <a href="#">ARC Community Infrastructure Grants</a></li> <li>4. <a href="#">CDBG Grants</a></li> <li>5. East TN Community Design Center may consider developing a streetscape plan with the Town of Cumberland Gap.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Procure funds to produce an overall streetscape plan for Colwyn and adjoining streets.</li> <li>7. Designate a Phase I pilot project</li> <li>8. Seek funding for Phase I design and constructions services (See <b>Resources</b>)</li> </ol>

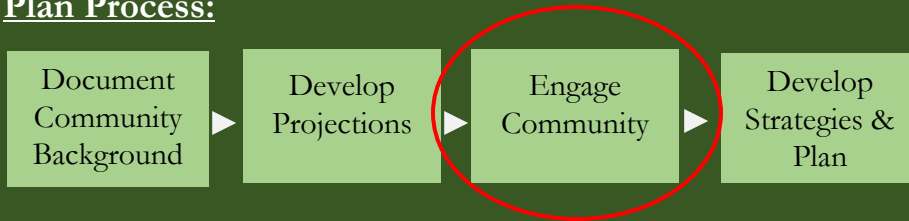


## **APPENDIX A - COMMUNITY MEETINGS**

# Town of Cumberland Gap Master Plan & Trailhead Development Plan

The **Goal** of the Master Plan is to develop a vision and priorities for facilities, policies, and initiatives that support public health and the local economy of Cumberland Gap and northern Claiborne County.

## Plan Process:



## Builds on previous planning efforts:

- Claiborne County Regional Ten-Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan (2018)
- Appalachian Gateway Communities Initiative: Cumberland Gap Tourism Assessment (2009)
- Olde Towne Cumberland Gap (1989)

## Mentor Communities:

- Damascus, Virginia
- Banner Elk, North Carolina
- Jonesborough, Tennessee

**Demographics** in Cumberland Gap have changed in a number of key ways over the last 10 years:

- Rapid growth of 14% per year
- Considerably younger than the region
- Higher portion of renter households
- Fewer households with children
- Steadily decreasing household incomes

## Projecting Steady **Growth:**

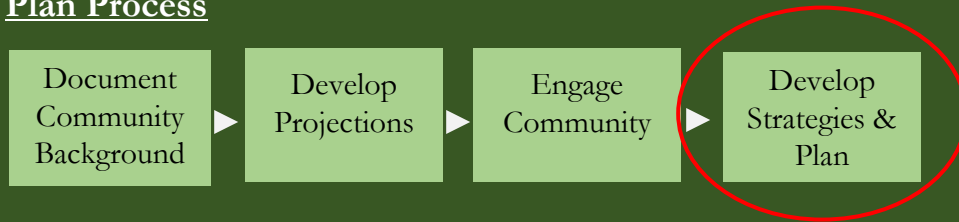
- Continued Growth of Lincoln Memorial University
- Connection of Major Regional Trails
- Cultural assets: Makers, Creative Businesses, Natural Assets, Cultural Artifacts



# Town of Cumberland Gap Master Plan & Trailhead Development Plan

The **Goal** of the Master Plan is to develop a vision and priorities for facilities, policies, and initiatives that support public health and the local economy of Cumberland Gap and northern Claiborne County.

## Plan Process



## Community Vision Statement

“The town of Cumberland Gap is a charming community surrounded by parks, trails, and historic landmarks. The town will build on these assets to support diverse businesses, accessible & well-marked trails, safe & friendly neighborhoods, and local artists while maintaining the town’s quaint small-town atmosphere.”

## **Key Questions:**

1. How do we develop manpower resources?
2. How can public investment spur private investment?
3. How can we promote ourselves?

## Draft Recommendations

### **Policies and Initiatives:**

1. Allocate Small Marketing Fund
2. Establish Special Events Committee
3. “Welcome” Events for LMU Students/Staff
4. Regular LMU Speaking Engagement for Mayor/Board
5. Formalized LMU Internship/Volunteer Programs
6. Certified Local Certified Gov. & Main Streets Program
7. Establish 501C3 organization under town
8. Establish Regional Vision for Trails/Trailheads
9. Connect with GET Associations on regional promotion
10. Conduct Retail Leakage Study
11. Revisit Zoning/Form Based Code
12. Continued Strategic Planning with LMU, NPS

### **Facilities:**

13. Install Short-Term Wayfinding
14. Purchase Estep Property
15. Establish New Water Source
16. Work with Harrogate on Signage
17. Install Bicycle Racks/Repair Stations
18. Strategic Parking Development
19. Streetscape Improvements Demonstration Project

Cumberland Gap City Hall  
September 17, 2018  
10:00 AM

# Cumberland Gap Downtown Master Plan

## Kickoff Meeting

### Meeting Agenda

- I. Introductions**
- II. Review Internal Project Goals and Desired Outcomes**

Community Development Partners to provide an overview of the goals discussed with the funding agency and lead an open discussion about desired outcomes.
- III. Overview of Study Area, Process and Responsibilities**

Community Development Partners to present proposed map of study area, proposed timeline for developing the master plan and review roles and responsibilities
- IV. Identify Stakeholders for Visioning Sessions**

Community Development Partners will lead discussion to identify key stakeholders for visioning sessions. If available, contact information for these stakeholders will be shared.
- V. Schedule Events and Dates for Listening Sessions**

Community Development Partners will lead discussion regarding events at which to hold listening sessions. Next steps for participating at these events will be identified.
- VI. Community-Wide Survey**

Community Development Partners will lead discussion on community-wide survey to collect the opinions of local residents.
- VII. Mentor Communities**

Community Development Partners will lead discussion to identify mentor communities that will provide lessons learned and best practices to incorporate into the Plan.
- VIII. Adjourn**

Cumberland GAP Master Plan

9/17

Kickoff Meeting

~~Carroll's was doing business at the time of the meeting~~

Carol Borneeman @ nps.gov

(606) 246 1070

Russ Range russell\_range @ nps.gov 606 246 1055

Deborah Chumley dchumley.shs @ gmail.com 606 242 7369

Near Ricciardi: near53poach @ nps.com

Jerrey Hopson jerrey4801 @ gmail.com

# MEETING SIGN-IN SHEET

County: Cumberland Gap Meeting Date: 12/18/2018  
 Project: Cumberland Gap Master Plan Place/Room: Cumberland Gap City Hall

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RALPHIE MCGINNIS	ANTH@pieternmuseum.org	423-869-9993
Bradley Smiddy	bradley.smiddy@tn.gov	423-262-9853



# MEETING SIGN-IN SHEET

Place: Cumberland Gap

Meeting Date: 4/12/2019

Project: Cumberland Gap Master Plan Workshops

Place/Room: Cumberland Gap City Hall

Name	E-Mail	Phone
John R Gunn	geri.gunn@bortmail.com	423-489-8242
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Coac Howard	Cumberlandbg@battco-opa.com	423-489-0508
Scott Oliver	Scott.Oliver@lamar.net	423-869-6502
Jeremy Hopson		
Pyllis Hopson		
Linda McSaffee		
Bill McSaffee		
Jays Sm. Th	RUSSELLT.222@gmail.com	865-454-5697
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James Thompson	dogsrulefl@gmail.com	423-526-7104

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Kimberly Hotka		
DAVID CURTIS	SCOTT@MVA43.COM	423-489-5311
AUDRA ELLISON		423-489-1787
DEBORAH DUNN	addunn@1@hotmail.com	423-526-7050
DONNIE PATTIN	MAIL.DON.9@GMAIL.COM	606-302-2601
Danna Dick Minkley		
dustin long		

# MEETING SIGN-IN SHEET

County: Cumberland Gap

Meeting Date: 7/18/2019

Project: Cumberland Gap Master Plan

Place/Room: Cumberland Gap City Hall

Name	E-Mail	Phone
SUSAN BLAIN <del>RECEPTIONIST</del>	the.pineapple.tear.room@ yhcw.org	423-869-4410
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ALYNNE CLUMBER	alclumber@shs.orgmail.com	606.242.7369
RICK RUSSELL	rick.russell@bprllc.net	865.919-5207
KARLYN CLARK	chamber@edchamberpartnership.com	423-626-4149
GARNET SUTHERLAND	Garnet.Sutherland@tva.gov	423-626-4291
Near Paajarelli		

**REMINDER!!!!**

## **Cumberland Gap Merchants Meeting**

*Wednesday, February 6<sup>th</sup> - 7:00 pm @ The Olde Mill Inn*

*(Dinner plate available at 6:30 PM)*

### **AGENDA**

#### **1. Cumberland Gap “Master Plan” Update (Brian Hill)**

#### **2. Tourism Guest Speakers!**

- **DAVE JONES** | East TN Division Manager  
Tennessee Department of Tourist Development
- **Alicia Phelps**  
Executive Director  
Northeast Tennessee Tourism Association

#### **3. Highway Signage – confirm who all wants to be included!**

Any questions or additional agenda items wanted? Please text Kimberly at 715-409-0530 or post a message in the Gap Merchants' Association Group in the FB Messenger App.



**APPENDIX B – MENTOR COMMUNITY LESSONS WHITE PAPER**



# Mentor Community Lessons Cumberland Gap Master Plan

## INTRODUCTION

In the spring of 2019, several communities were visited by a committee of business owners, elected officials, and community influencers from Cumberland Gap to discover effective practices and tools for leveraging natural and historic resources to enhance economic development and public health. The communities were selected because they shared common challenges, opportunities or other characteristics with Cumberland Gap. For example, the selected communities are relatively small and surrounded by park land, lie at the intersection of notable trails, or have historically significant characteristics. Further, the selected communities have been recognized for their success at using their natural and historic assets to further their economic development and support public health.

In each community, a panel of local decision makers, business owners, champions and other influencers was assembled and they were asked to prepare presentations on their community and the strategies developed to take advantage of natural or historic resources. It should be noted here that all three of the towns visited have done an exemplary job in championing their community and they not only welcomed the committee from Cumberland Gap, but freely provided lessons and strategies they had acquired over their years of service. What they provided has the potential to impact Cumberland Gap for years to come.

What follows is a description of the mentor communities visited and the lessons learned from those visits.


## BANNER ELK, NC

Banner Elk, with a population of about 950 citizens, is located in Western North Carolina and, like Cumberland Gap, is surrounded by mountains, parks and forest that provide an abundance of outdoor recreation activities including skiing, golfing, hiking, horseback riding, rafting, and fishing.

### Assets

Natural and cultural assets in the area play an important role in the heritage and development of Banner Elk. Notable amenities include three wineries, Grandfather Mountain, multiple ski resorts, as well as a number of hiking and biking trails. Cool summer weather is a major asset for the community, which rarely sees temperatures above the upper 70's in the hottest months. Visitors are drawn to this temperate weather and the surrounding beauty all summer long. In Banner Elk itself, walking trails, parks, and sidewalks throughout a quaint downtown area provide interest and activities for residents and visitors alike.

Several events occur in the community throughout the year, including the nationally celebrated Woolly Worm Festival where nearly 20,000 participants and spectators and over 150 vendors gather to race woolly worms against one another in downtown



Banner Elk<sup>1</sup>. Lees McRae College, which lies near the heart of the community, has a history of collaborating with the town on events and activities. Founded in 1899, the college brings in almost 1,000 students from 34 states and 11 countries to live and take classes at the college's campus in downtown Banner Elk. The college also hosts 21 competitive athletic teams which offer regular events for residents and visitors<sup>2</sup>.

Several of the buildings listed in the National Register of Historic Places in Avery County are located in Banner Elk<sup>3</sup>. Among those, the historic Banner Elk School located next to the town green in downtown Banner Elk has proven a notable asset to the community in recent years. Initially built in 1939, the formerly county-operated school closed its doors as a working school in 2011. The building was purchased by Banner Elk in 2014 and is incrementally being converted for use in supporting local arts, enterprise, and events. A book exchange center in the heart of the building provides gathering space and, in 2018, rented out over 17,000 books to over 1,100 patrons. Other amenities in the building include meeting spaces, several artist studios, an art gallery, and a state-of-the-art auditorium supporting local performances. A courtyard is currently being developed on site to provide an outdoor venue.

## Key Lessons

Banner Elk has taken advantage of its resources and other opportunities in a number of key ways that offer lessons to Cumberland Gap.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.woollyworm.com/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.lmc.edu>

## Planning

Banner Elk has a rich history of proactively visioning and developing strategies to prioritize and fund developments for the community.


Banner Elk maintains a 20-year Comprehensive Land Use Plan which is revised periodically and provides guidance to protect historic resources, direct future land use decisions, establish legal authority for land use regulations, and prioritize service improvements such as sewer, police, fire protection, and recreation infrastructure. In an effort to prioritize improvements that would make the town more walkable, the community generated their first Streetscape Plan in 1999. This plan was augmented with a Pedestrian Plan adopted in 2009, addressing trails, sidewalks, and intermodal systems. The town is now working on an effort to incorporate elements of the Streetscape and Pedestrian Plans into their next update of the Land Use Plan.

Each of these plans provides priorities and strategies that guide the town in effectively investing in its future. Furthermore, the information and public process used in these plans is often referred to when trying to find a middle ground and consensus during public meetings.

## Fundraising

Grants, fundraising and donations have contributed to impressive developments in Banner Elk. Not least among these is the funding for purchase of the Historic Banner Elk School and associated improvements that not only preserve this historic asset but also provide numerous cultural and economic development opportunities.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/index.htm>



The “Friends of the Historic Banner Elk School” is a 501(c)3 non-profit foundation that was formed in order to negotiate a favorable price on and fundraise for the purchase of the shuttered Historic Banner Elk School. With the assistance of the foundation, the town negotiated a price of \$1 million for the School on a twelve year note with zero percent interest. With the school providing over 15,000 square feet in a significant historic structure and 5.4 acres in downtown that can host fairs and other events, this was a significant agreement. More impressive, perhaps, is that the town committed to funding payments on the note as well as all renovations and other improvements through grants and fundraising. To this day, the town and foundation have kept to that commitment and community residents have expressed a good deal of positive feedback and hope for the facility and its reuse.

Wishing to expand funding efforts to other elements of the community beyond the school, the town changed the name of the Foundation to the Education, Arts and Cultural Complex in 2018 and expanded the leadership to include several new board members.

Aside from the Foundation itself, Banner Elk has enacted a number of strategies to further its fundraising and development. The town hired its own full-time grant writer who works with the City Council and members of the foundation to research grants and develop applications. This hire has allowed the town to significantly expand its bandwidth to pursue new fundraising and grant opportunities. The Tourism Development department recently hired a Public Relations Manager who has generated a good deal of publicity for the town and businesses. The new revenues generated by this publicity have more than paid for the salary of this position.

The Chamber of Commerce, which holds monthly after-hours meetings with business owners, has been recognized by the City

Council for its leadership and ability to work in tandem with the town to address needs and opportunities in the community.

Cumberland Gap could draw from some of these strategies by looking for new opportunities to reuse historic structures, budgeting for grants and public relations staff, and continuing to work closely with businesses to collaboratively address community needs.

### Cooperation with the College


The cooperation between Banner Elk and Lees McRae College is remarkable and has produced many mutual benefits over the years. The level of cooperation between these entities is the direct result of proactive communication and concerted efforts to partner on behalf of both parties.

For example, the town and college collaborate each year to hold a community picnic on the downtown green. To encourage interaction between students and the residents and businesses of Banner Elk, the college closes down its cafeteria for the day and students receive vouchers to purchase lunch from vendors in town and join locals on the green.

At the beginning of each school year, the Chamber of Commerce welcomes students to Banner Elk by displaying banners that read “Welcome to Lees McRae”. This messaging fosters a sense of integration between the town and college.

The college encourages its students to volunteer on projects in Banner Elk, Avery County, and beyond through events such as the Annual Mountain Day of Service, which it has organized for years. The Banner Elk Kiwanis Club collaborates with the college by providing regular volunteer opportunities that further connect students, staff, and faculty with residents and businesses throughout the region.





The town and college have also taken proactive measures to provide cost savings to one another. For example, when a leak in the college's water lines was discovered, the Town Council voted to not charge the college for the water losses. Another example occurs when the college opens its parking areas to the public for use during prominent town events, expanding the ability of the town to host larger groups of visitors without the expense of running shuttles or building new parking areas.

Cumberland Gap and Lincoln Memorial University could benefit from carrying out similar collaborative efforts. An annual picnic could bring students, staff, and faculty from LMU into Cumberland Gap to explore the local resources. Banners placed around town welcoming LMU students could encourage a feeling of integration. Sharing resources, such as parking could help both entities save costs and expand programs.

#### Support for Public Investments

Another aspect highlighted by town officials was the proactive approach that has been taken in building support around public investments such as utilities. The town provides early and frequent communication with residents and businesses to highlight the benefits of the public services that it provides and the cost of providing those services. Communication around the long-term vision for these services is also provided. Council members identified this communication as key to their ability to build political support when funds need to be allocated for repairs or improvements.

Proactive communication about the costs, benefits, and long-term vision for public services in Cumberland Gap could build support

for the development or expansion of local resources, such as water, sewer and sidewalks.

## DAMASCUS, VA

Damascus is a name that has become associated with trails. The town, with 790 residents located in Southwest Virginia, draws in tens of thousands of visitors each year to use and celebrate the Appalachian Trail and Virginia Creeper Trail which pass through the heart of town.

### Assets


Damascus lies at the confluence of 8 trails<sup>4</sup>, many of which have connections with one another and with businesses and local points of interest, lending to the overall feeling of being a 'trail town'.

Trail Days is a large annual event to celebrate the Appalachian Trail and those who hike it. The festival began in 1987 and now draws in over 20,000 annual attendees. In order to accommodate all of the visitors, the town provides an area that is used as a temporary tent city. Local and regional businesses began sponsoring Trail Days and cooperating with the town on the event 5 years ago.

The Virginia Creeper Trail is a former abandoned 34.3 mile stretch of railroad converted into a multi-use non-motorized National Recreation Trail. The route begins in Abingdon, VA, then travels through Damascus before ending at Mount Rogers National Recreation Area. The trail, which opened in 1987, travels over diverse landscapes including mountains, forests and trout-laden streams and crosses over several wooden boardwalks and trestle bridges. Soon after opening, the trail was given recognition by well-read regional periodicals such as the Charlotte Observer and Blue Ridge Outdoors, which significantly increased the regional and

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.visitdamascus.org/hiking/>



national awareness of the trail. Today, the trail has become an important attraction, drawing in 250,000 people per year, and representing a major income generator for Damascus, pulling in an estimated \$450,000 - \$500,000 per year from several new restaurants, outfitters, and a brewery<sup>5</sup>. In addition, a number of local shuttle services operate seasonally, providing transportation for mountain biking on the Virginia Creeper Trail, as well as canoeing and paddling opportunities in the region.

In 2015, Damascus completed a multi-year Master Planning effort that identified key economic and physical improvements to revitalize areas of the town. The Master Plan included an intensive public process and identified nearly \$6,000,000 in improvements, many of which are in the process of being developed using local, state, and federal funding sources.

With all of these developments in the local and regional economy, town officials expressed a shortage of staff to keep up with increasing demands. For example, the Damascus Town Clerk also operates as the Tourism Director. With the trajectory of tourism development in the town and region, Damascus is hopeful that the additional revenue from the development efforts recommended in the Master Plan will soon allow the town to increase its staff capacity and further serve those visiting and living in the community.

### **Key Lessons**

Damascus has a number of characteristics in common with Cumberland Gap and the leadership that they have shown in taking advantage of their trails and natural assets provides a number of valuable lessons.

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<sup>5</sup> Stump, Joshua, 7/7/2018, *If We Build It: The Tourism Economy in S.W. Virginia* (accessed online, 4/2/2019)

### **Proactive Marketing**

Proactive marketing has been important to development in Damascus over recent years. Through the 1970's and 1980's, manufacturing was the primary economic driver. As globalization and technological efficiencies chipped away at manufacturing jobs in the U.S., trails began to take a prominent role in the region beginning in the 1990's. Through the 2000's, however, many local policies and investments were reactive to the demands of residents and trail users, rather than proactive towards future potential. Damascus was hit hard by the recession and, in 2008, found itself unable to maintain the cost of its utilities, selling both its water and sewer system to Washington County. As a result of this sale, local developers face new hurdles, such as paying high prices for new connections to these utilities.

Damascus turned a corner over the last 5 years as it began championing its assets through proactive marketing and self-promotion. While not a large sum, the community has budgeted \$4,000 to \$5,000 annually for marketing and promotion. This funding, in turn, has been used to leverage other moneys available through state and non-profit grant sources, generating a total closer to \$15,000 to \$20,000 per year, which has begun to have a significant impact. Town officials expressed that their only wish was that they had begun funding marketing and proactively promoting the town much earlier.

The 2015 Master Plan identified a primary branding and marketing strategy centered on the town's ability to welcome and meet the needs of residents and visitors seeking trails and an outdoor experience. Town officials highlighted the role that internet and



social media-based tactics have played in marketing the town's ability to meet those trail user and outdoor enthusiast needs.

In Cumberland Gap, proactively investing in marketing, collaborating with other regional entities and taking advantage of internet and social media-based marketing platforms could accelerate the town's ability to highlight the assets and opportunities it has to offer.

#### Encourage Business Diversity

During interviews, town Officials from Damascus emphasized the difficulty of their seasonal business. Trail Days produces a significant influx of visitors and spending in the town but occurs only once a year. While the Virginia Creeper Trail brings in more sustained business, it too is seasonal and during the winter months foot traffic slows considerably.

To ameliorate these swings in the local economy and increase the community's economic resilience, the town is currently enacting strategies to promote more diverse business ventures. One strategy that is currently being developed is the promotion of the local music scene as a revenue generator. While outdoor music festivals are still impacted by weather, many venues can operate and attract wide participation year-round. The town is also attempting to encourage the development of a number of other event types throughout the year, and provide some new revenue streams during slower months.


The Washington County Business Challenge provides training to local entrepreneurs and small businesses who compete to create winning business strategies. The challenge provides over \$32,000 in business investment awards for businesses looking to expand the number of jobs in Washington County. Participants in this challenge are provided 6 weeks of classes and the selected winner receives free CPA & legal services for a year.

The 2015 Master Plan conducted a retail leakage study to reveal where local spending was not being met by local retail supply. The study identified several industries that could be developed to capture more of the local market demand, including full service restaurants, construction and building supplies, healthcare services, as well as a range of general merchandise services, such as those for clothing, furniture, and electronics. The study recognized that a loss of consumer goods and retail potential to larger cities and internet sales was inevitable. However, through recruitment, economic development, and marketing, the study concluded that the town should be able to capture about 20% of retail currently leaving the area.

Cumberland Gap could certainly benefit from a similar approach to diversify local business offerings. In particular, as demand from the university population and users of the surrounding trail system continues, the town may want to encourage the types of businesses that not only meet the needs of trail users, but also capture the local needs and spending by residents.

#### Non-Motorized Priority

Trails and non-motorized routes have long been a strong component and priority for the community of Damascus. The Trail Days Committee is a local non-profit that operates under the town and coordinates the annual Trail Days festival. The Trail Days Committee is also working with the Appalachian Trail Conservancy to locate and develop a new Appalachian Trail visitor's center near the town park as a resource and draw for both residents and visitors who want to learn more and take part in activities related to the trail. When the center is complete, Damascus will be only one of four communities along the length of the Appalachian Trail with such a facility.



Town officials identified an increase to bicycle and pedestrian connectivity as their number one priority among physical improvements. Damascus is currently working on a signage and wayfinding project with the aim to connect users of the Virginia Creeper Trail to other trails and to local businesses and services. This project will involve over \$15,000 for new signs that connect users and promote the town's assets. The 2015 Master Plan reinforced these priorities by recommending a series of trails to connect downtown with the surrounding parks and riverfront.

Cumberland Gap could draw on some of the examples set by Damascus and its use of trails. In particular, investments that enhance connections, wayfinding, and signage could benefit Cumberland Gap as it seeks to form an identity that celebrates its trails.

### Balance Local Housing Needs

One of the greatest challenges identified by town officials in Damascus over the next 10 years is maintaining sufficient real estate to accommodate the growth of rentals and bed and breakfasts with residential needs. Although there are no easy solutions to this challenge, town officials did express that they were taking their time to develop policies slowly and carefully so as to address the needs of local residents without pushing out or adversely affecting the potential for business development. As Cumberland Gap faces similar issues, officials should be proactive in ensuring strategies meet the needs of both residents and visitors

## JONESBOROUGH, TN

Jonesborough is a town of 5,400 citizens located in East Tennessee. The community was founded in 1779, 17 years before

the founding of the State, and has done much to preserve its heritage while maintaining events and services that continue to make the town attractive to visitors and residents alike.


### Assets

Historic preservation has been a driving issue in Jonesborough since the 1970's. Over the years, leaders in the community have begun to see the benefits resulting from these efforts. Town officials reported that they have seen significant economic development follow the preservation and reuse of historic structures and, in turn, reported a generally higher quality of life for residents resulting from both the economic development and preservation. Notable historic structures in Jonesborough are too numerous to fully account for here, but they include historic inns, mansions, academies, churches, a school, a courthouse, a mailroom, and many residential homes. The design of these buildings is iconic and belongs to a range of architectural styles including Greek revival, Victorian, Classical, Federal, and Bungalow. The oldest of these buildings dates back to the year 1778. The preservation of this varied and iconic architecture has provided the backdrop for the story of Jonesborough and its residents<sup>6</sup>.

The ability of Jonesborough to tell its story and share the stories of others has in fact been paramount to the identity of the community. In 1973, the community hosted the original Jonesborough Storytelling Festival, the first event of its kind. The first festival set up wagons and hay bales downtown and hosted a total of 60 storytellers and participants. The festival quickly gained steam and now pulls in world-renowned storytellers who perform for over 10,000 listeners annually in downtown Jonesborough. The event was recently acclaimed as one of the top 100 events in the

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/index.htm>



Country. An associated foundation provides toolkits and strategies for storytelling festivals around the world<sup>7</sup>.

Spurred by the successes of the Storytelling Festival, the town now organizes and hosts events and festivals throughout most of the year, providing activities and interest for both visitors and residents.

## Key Lessons

Jonesborough's leadership and success in preservation, adaptive reuse, partnerships and support of the arts provide a number of valuable lessons which could be adapted for use in Cumberland Gap and beyond.

### Prioritizing Preservation

Government officials in Jonesborough are very active in encouraging development that is compatible with, and supportive of, the community's historic assets. The town provides leadership in visioning with the local community, researches grants and fundraising opportunities, and reviews plans and building specifications to ensure consistency with historic architecture. In doing so, they have created high expectations and uniform processes for application review and development.

Historic preservation in Jonesborough has gone through phases. In the 1970's and '80's, the public expressed indignation about local government interfering with personal property rights to preserve historic assets. However, by the 1990's, the benefits of historic preservation started to become apparent. Property owners began seeking guidance from town officials on how to best maintain the historical values of their homes and properties. Today, new residents and businesses are attracted by the town's

historic buildings and the events occurring throughout the year celebrating the town's history.


One step that Jonesborough has taken in its historic preservation is becoming a Certified Local Government. This certification has afforded Jonesborough a number of benefits including technical assistance, training sessions, special networking, and preference for allocation of historic preservation grants. The Certified Local Government program is administered jointly by the Tennessee Historical Commission (THC) and the National Park Service. Recognizing the long-term value of historic preservation, the program works across local, State, and Federal levels of government to encourage commitment to the preservation of historic cultural resources. To become a Certified Local Government, a community must establish a local historic preservation commission, survey and inventory local historic resources, enforce protection of historic properties through ordinance or other legal measures, facilitate local participation including involvement in the National Register listing process, and carry out other responsibilities delegated under the National Historic Preservation Act. To move forward with the certification process, a community should begin by reaching out to the Certified Local Government Coordinator, at the Tennessee Historical Commission<sup>8</sup>.

Jonesborough has also obtained Tennessee Main Street designation which town officials reported as having boosted business retention as well as the impact of local events. The Tennessee Main Street program is part of the larger National Main Street Center and the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The program provides designated communities with a structured

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.storytellingcenter.net/festival/about-festival/>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.tennesseepreservationtrust.org/resources/thc-certified-local-governments>



approach and resources for redeveloping and strengthening their downtown through design, economic restructuring, promotion and organizational improvements. This combined approach has seen considerable results over the years. From 1980 through 2018, the cumulative economic impact of the program has resulted in almost \$80 billion dollars reinvested and over 640,000 jobs generated in local communities nationwide<sup>9</sup>. Becoming Tennessee Main Street-designated requires the establishment of a non-profit with a paid executive director to manage the local program and establishing a strong network of local private and public sector organizations to work with Tennessee Main Streets Program Director.

Jonesborough has enacted other measures to ensure development and maintenance of current building stock is congruent with the town's historic assets. The passing of a Demolition by Neglect Ordinance is one such measure. Under this Ordinance, if a building is determined to be non-conforming through disrepair, the owner is given notice and must either fix the discrepancy or sell the property.

Town officials noted that generating long-range master plans has helped maintain support for the regulations and investments in preservation described above. Master plans investigate historical trends, best practices, and public opinion in the local community. In doing so, they allow decision makers and the public to develop a vision for their community and understand the need for investments and regulations before they occur. Long-range master plans generated by Jonesborough in the past ten years include *An Interpretive Plan for Historic Jonesborough* and a *Branding, Development, & Marketing Action Plan*, both of which are available on the town's

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.mainstreet.org/mainstreetimpact>

website<sup>10</sup>. Both of these plans provide values, visions, and concrete recommendations for the community's future. Both plans were developed with and continue to receive wide support from city officials, merchants and townspeople.


Through the combination of measures described above, Jonesborough preserves and makes use of its' unique historic assets to bolster economic development and quality of life in the community. Cumberland Gap could take similar approaches to preserve and make use of valued historic assets. In particular, Cumberland Gap should consider ordinances or codes that further support and facilitate historic preservation. They should consider becoming a Certified Local Government to gain all of the associated training, networking and grant opportunities. Cumberland Gap should also consider investing in the steps to join the Tennessee Main Street program. Finally, Cumberland Gap should continue to invest in planning efforts through which the public can provide their values and vision, and decision makers can develop the steps needed for the community's future preservation and development.

### Cultivating Partnerships

For years, the Historic Jonesborough Foundation has partnered with the town of Jonesborough and the Heritage Foundation of Northeast Tennessee & Southwest Virginia to plan for and invest in the preservation of historic structures in the community. The high level of collaboration between these entities has been hugely beneficial to their shared preservation efforts.

When describing their approach to marketing and tourism, town officials reported that partnering with other communities in the region has been very important. Regular communication between

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.jonesboroughtn.org/index.php/town-org-chart/131-studies-reports>



these communities for upcoming events has allowed them to share space and provide regular promotions for one another. Town officials also reported that these partnerships have allowed for a level of consistency in messaging and communication that has had a positive impact on both local and regional marketing.

Another initiative undertaken by the town, the Story Town Initiative, focuses on proactively collecting stories from local and regional residents. These stories, in turn, are used to inspire community activism and art in the community. By collecting stories throughout the region and weaving them into the town's art and activities, Jonesborough has built a brand that incorporates not only its residents' stories and vision, but those in the surrounding communities.

Town officials also reported that over the years, some of their greatest successes in historic preservation have been through proactive partnerships and cooperation with property owners. As these property owners have come to recognize the value provided by concerted preservation efforts, they have become partners in assuring its success.

Finally, officials reported that partnerships developed between the town and merchants have been an invaluable asset to Jonesborough over the years. Jonesborough town limits abut directly to the city limits of Johnson City. As such, the communities share a chamber of commerce and market area. With the level of commercial development and activity occurring in Johnson City, Jonesborough faces challenges in capturing its share of the market. To address these challenges, the Jonesborough Area Merchants & Service Association (JAMSA) was formed as a collaborative effort between the town and its merchants. The organization has started to gain some significant traction over recent years and collaboration between the town and merchants has played a big role. The town and merchants meet regularly to

brainstorm ideas to promote the town and its businesses. Staff and resources are provided to JAMSA by the town for marketing, promotions, and to execute business ideas. Several workshops hosted by the town have provided training and networking opportunities for local merchants. Jonesborough used a USDA Rural Development loan, coupled with funding from merchants and other local sources to send several of its' business owners to Colorado for technical business strategy training. Finally, the town provides a venue and staff for ticket sales for events hosted by JAMSA, such as the annual Chocolate Fest, Strolling on Main in May, and Scoop Fest. In turn, the merchants provide numerous promotions for one another and the many amenities that the town has to offer residents and visitors alike.

In Cumberland Gap, continued efforts to partner with local and regional foundations, continued regional marketing efforts, initiatives to collect local and regional stories, and proactive partnerships with local property owners and merchants could bolster the town's preservation and development efforts.

#### Investing in the Arts

According to Bob Browning, City Manager for Jonesborough, "attention to the arts is what creates quality of life for a community." Over the years, the community has supported the arts in numerous ways that provide activities for a wide range of visitors and residents. Efforts include the Mary B. Martin Program for the Arts which provides over 30 courses in the visual and performing arts, weekly music on the square events held May through September, the Yarn Exchange monthly radio performances, a Reparatory Theater, four juried and curated



annual art shows, and an International Storytelling Center and Storytelling Guild<sup>11</sup>.

In 1973, Jonesborough hosted the first National Storytelling Festival, beginning the town's national and international leadership in storytelling events. However, the development of the Storytelling Festival has not always been easy. In the 1990's, the organization found itself in financial trouble. The original founding organization had split into two separate foundations and funding was growing thin. Recognizing the importance of the storytelling festival, Jonesborough obtained a loan from USDA Rural Development to fund the Mary B. Martin International Storytelling Center and provide a permanent home for the Storytelling Festival and other arts activities in the town. The Center opened in 2002 and provides a hub for storytelling events throughout the year, art programs for all ages, and a venue for showing off the best Jonesborough has to offer.

A recent project that Jonesborough has undertaken in support of the arts is the purchase and ongoing restoration of the former Jackson Theatre on Main Street in the heart of downtown. The Jackson opened as an active theatre in the 1940's but has sat empty and derelict in the heart of downtown for years. The town applied for and is using a CDBG Façade Grant to return the classic double entryway doors, as well as the marquee and vertical sign that were a historic signature to the façade of the building. This project will turn the Jackson Theatre back into a performance venue, enhance the retail customer base, and generate jobs. The renovation responds to recent branding and marketing plans that identified a need for evening-time activities and overnight accommodations that would allow businesses and restaurants to receive the full benefit of a tourism-based economy. The town is planning to use

the renovated theatre space to host independent films, musicals, storytelling and theatrical performances, as well as conferences and workshops that greatly increase foot traffic downtown.

Jonesborough has also supported theatre programming by hiring an Arts Director to develop and oversee programming for the Repertory Theatre, located adjacent to the Jackson Theatre renovation. Under the leadership of the Arts Director, the Repertory Theatre generated \$20,000 in profits in 2018, 50% of which went back to the town.

As programming continues to develop and the adjacent Jackson Theatre renovations allow for an expanded schedule and breadth of performances, the arts are anticipated to have a greater year-round impact on the economy and quality of life for visitors and residents throughout the region.

Cumberland Gap could draw on some of the leadership demonstrated by Jonesborough through continued development of programmed arts activities, particularly those that can engage the community into the evening hours and provide a draw for tourism. The purchase and restoration of historic buildings could also be used to support the community's artists while preserving historic assets.


## CONCLUSIONS

No two communities are exactly alike, and many of the strategies that were developed by Banner Elk, Damascus, and Jonesborough are directly linked to their unique challenges and opportunities and could not be replicated in the same manner in Cumberland Gap. However, all three communities provide inspiration and valuable lessons that could benefit Cumberland Gap as it prepares for

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<sup>11</sup> <https://www.jonesboroughtn.org/>





future challenges and opportunities. In considering the lessons provided by the three mentor communities, several major themes arise.

The first is the use of State and National programs that support preservation of historic and natural assets. Programs such as Certified Local Governments, the National Main Street initiative, as well as those provided by regional and national trail conservancies provide valuable technical training and grant resources to the mentor communities and could be of great use in Cumberland Gap.

The second theme is the high priority given to non-motorized safety and connectivity. The mentor communities recognize that building foot traffic is an effective way to generate a positive brand for their community while increasing retail activity and the associated employment opportunities.

The third theme is the value of proactively supporting partnerships at the local and regional levels. Town officials from all three communities shared that some of the most impactful fundraising, programming and development activities come from frequent communication and sharing of resources both within and between jurisdictions.

The fourth theme is the use of marketing tools to proactively champion the community and region to potential visitors and investors. By incorporating even small sums for advertising into the local budget, leveraging advertising funding through grants, and hiring for positions that can promote local and regional assets, the mentor communities have benefited greatly from proactive marketing.

The fifth theme is the development of non-profit organizations under the jurisdiction of the town to support fundraising and development efforts for specific areas of interest. Because non-

profits can pursue a wide range of funding sources and develop partnerships with outside organizations, they add valuable bandwidth to the mentor communities' development efforts.

The lessons and strategies provided by the mentor communities are invaluable and should be carefully considered as Cumberland Gap takes future steps to support the local economy, improve quality of life and ultimately enhance public health in the town and surrounding region.

#### Major themes in the lessons provided by the mentor communities include:

1. Make use of State and Federal programs that support natural and historic preservation
2. Prioritize non-motorized safety and connectivity
3. Support partnerships at the local and regional level
4. Use marketing tools to proactively champion the community
5. Develop a non-profit organization to expand bandwidth of development efforts



**APPENDIX C – MAPS**













# Existing Land Uses



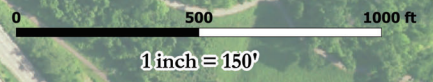
Middlesboro

Harrogate

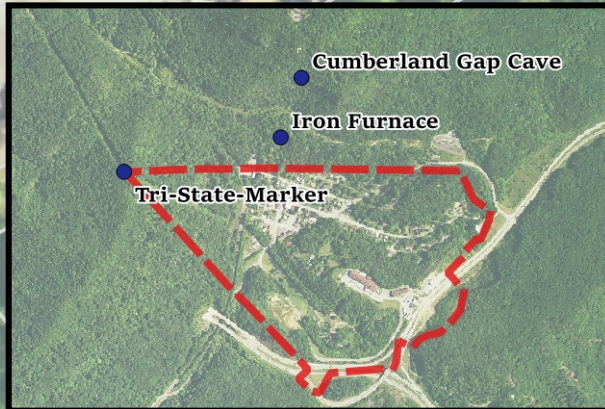
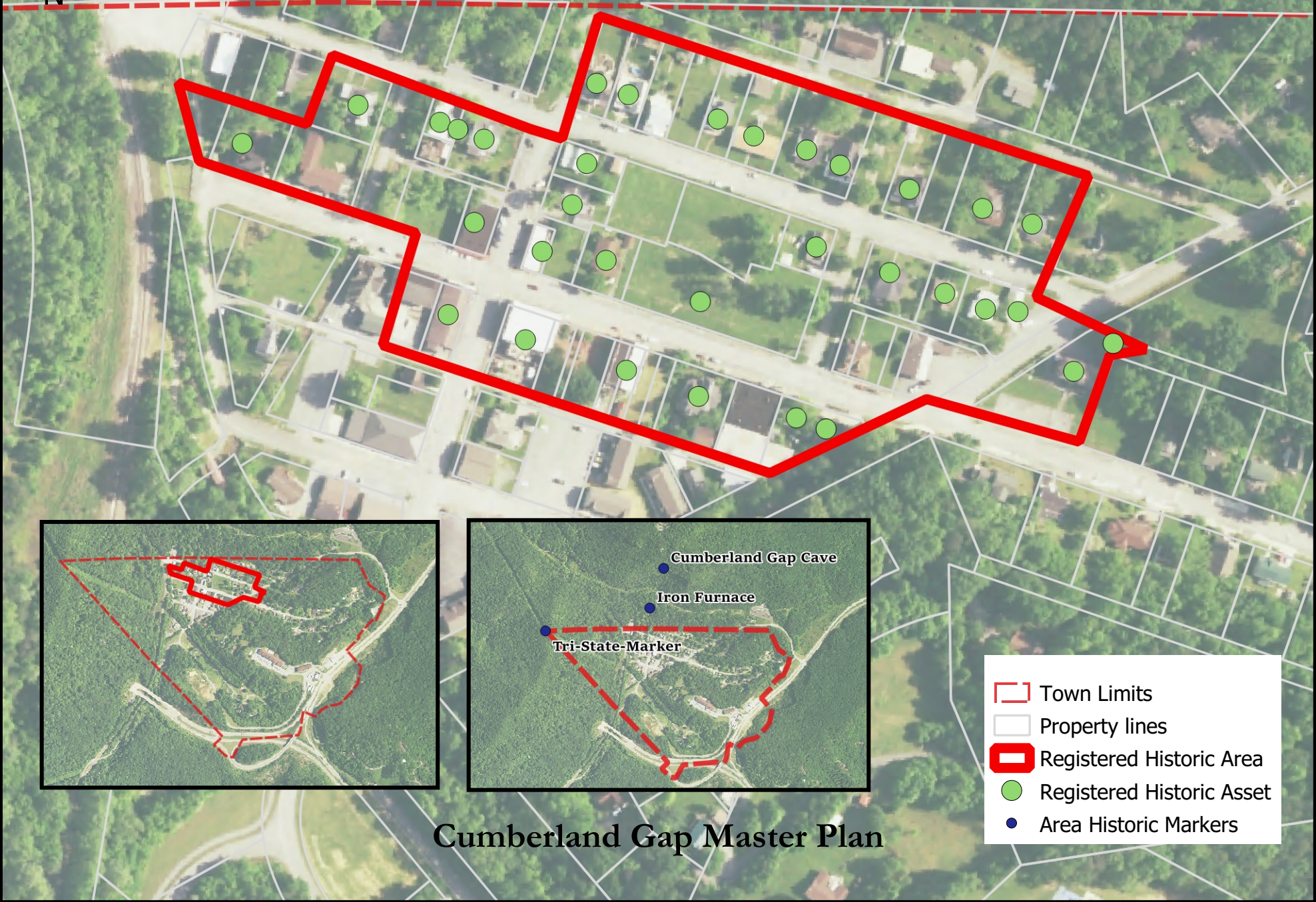
**Legend**






 Town Limits	 Hotel/Motel
 Single Family	 Commercial/Residential
 Duplex	 Semi Public Use
 Multi-Family	 Public Use
 Commercial	 Vacant Property
 Mobile Home	 Right-of-Way

# Cumberland Gap Master Plan



# Historic Assets



-  Town Limits
-  Property lines
-  Registered Historic Area
-  Registered Historic Asset
-  Area Historic Markers





## Cumberland Gap Master Plan



# Parks and Trails

Middlesboro

Harrogate

-  Town Limits
-  Parks
-  Trailheads
-  Walkways

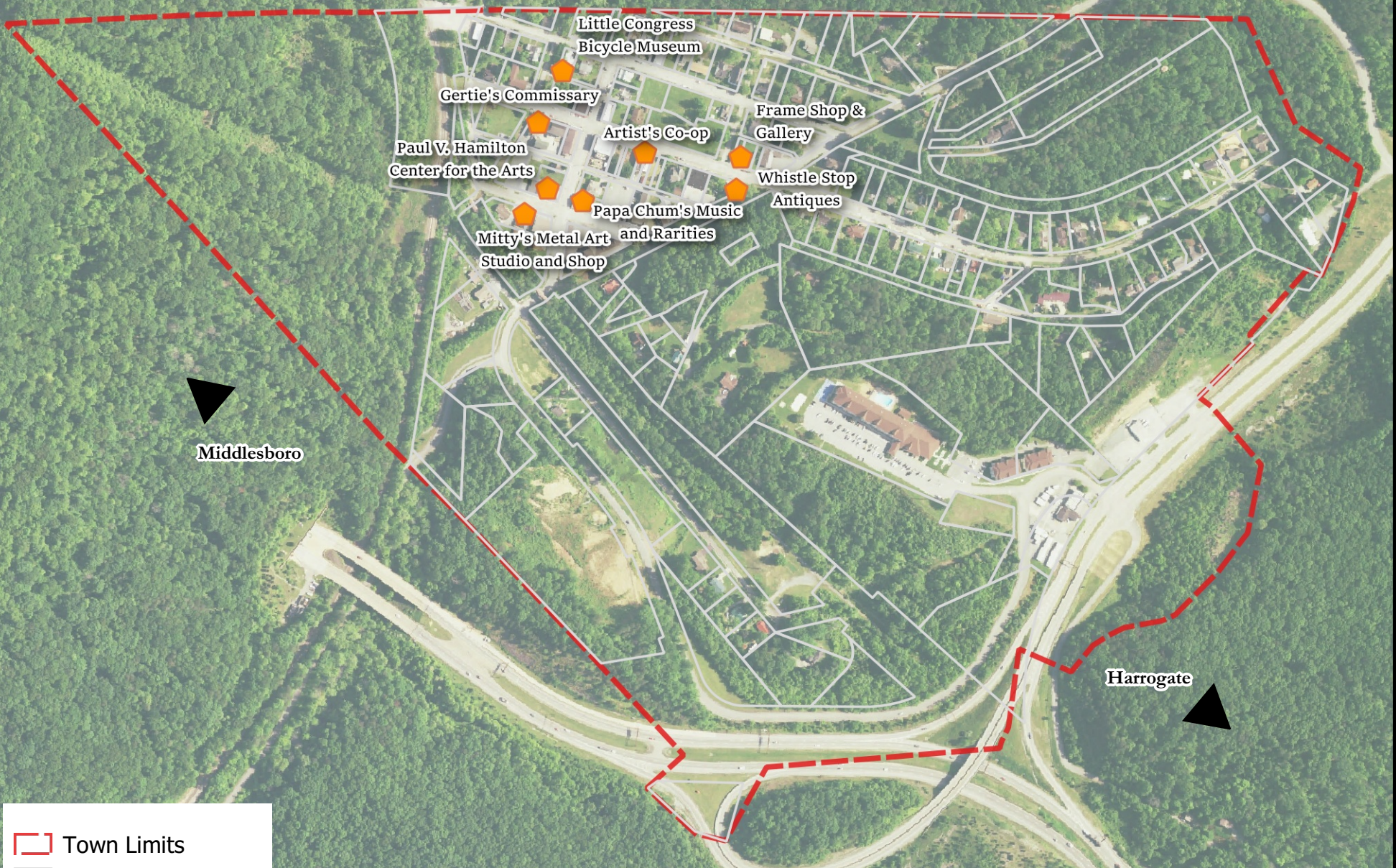


Surrounding National Park

# Cumberland Gap Master Plan



# Creative Businesses



- Little Congress Bicycle Museum
- Gertie's Commissary
- Paul V. Hamilton Center for the Arts
- Mitty's Metal Art and Rarities Studio and Shop
- Artist's Co-op
- Papa Chum's Music
- Frame Shop & Gallery
- Whistle Stop Antiques

Middlesboro

Harrogate

- Town Limits
- Property lines
- Creative Businesses

## Cumberland Gap Master Plan



# Vacant/Underutilized Properties

~45 Acres



Middlesboro

Harrogate

**Legend**

- Elevation Contours
- Walkways
- Town Limits
- Vacant/Underutilized Lots

# Cumberland Gap Master Plan

