

The background is a watercolor-style illustration. The upper portion shows rolling hills in shades of yellow, green, and grey. The lower portion depicts a town with various buildings, some with red roofs, and a prominent wooden tower or structure on the right side. The overall style is soft and painterly.

Tucker County Cultural District Authority

Performance Agenda 2017

Front & back cover art by Robin McClintock, Cultural District Authority grant recipient.

Both pieces are a part of “Tell Me a Story,” a series of paintings and works on paper inspired by a collection of 19th century archival photographs taken at industrial sites within Tucker County.

www.robinmclintock.com

Front: “What’s More Important?”(detail) — 2016
Watercolor, graphite, wax
22” x 30”

Back: “38 Ways to Work” (detail) — 2016
Digital transfer graphite, wax
8 ½” x 11”

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Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Methodology	2
Goals & Objectives.....	3
Protect	4
Connect	6
Enhance	8
Promote	11
Support.....	14
Project Site Design & Development	16
Acknowledgements.....	17
Appendices	18
A. Tucker County Economic Study	
B. Cultural Identity & Design Proposals	
C. Visitors Survey Report	
D. Residents Survey Report	
E. Senate Bill No. 561	

“We are very fortunate for the grants that we have received and the hardworking community members that have put in blood, sweat, and tears into it all, but I’d like to continue to see that happen and to keep that growth happening.”

— Jessica Waldo

Performance Agenda

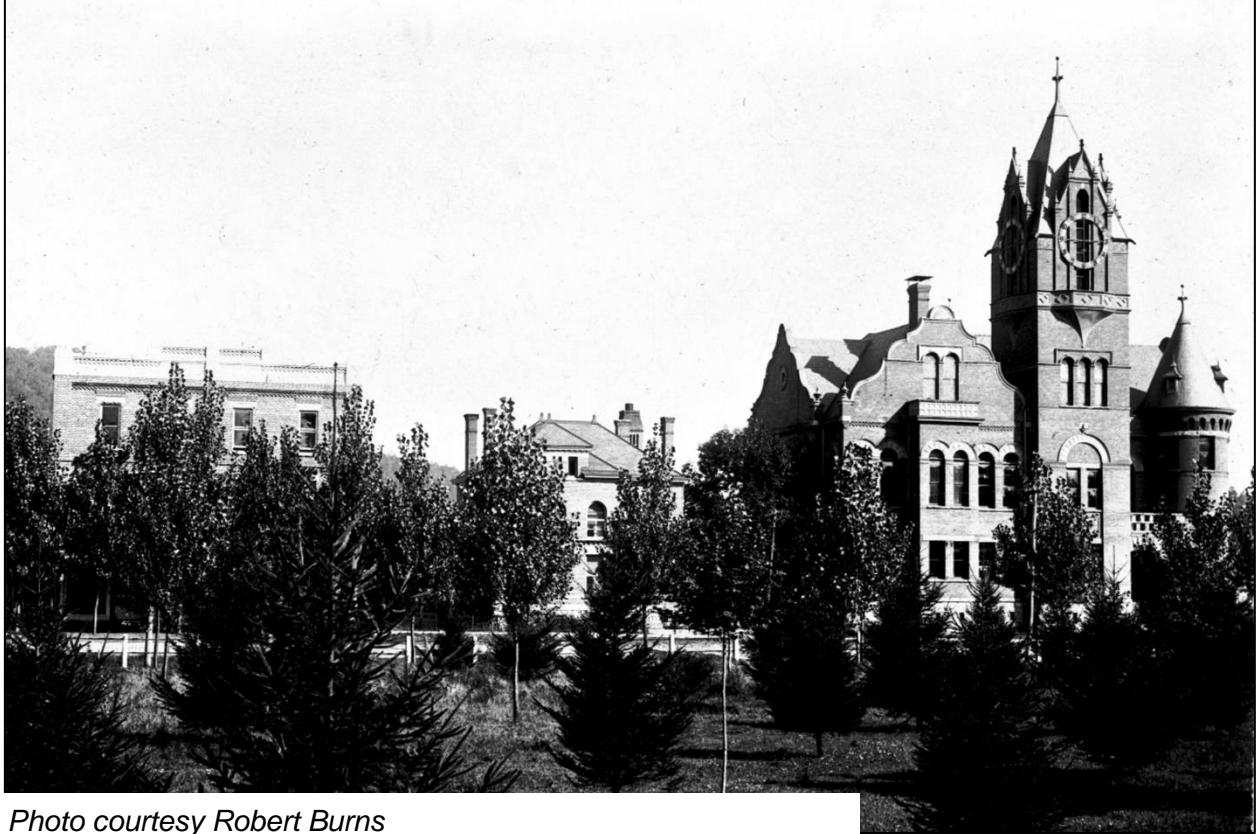


Photo courtesy Robert Burns

“We have folks coming in from out of the area and they try to capture the essence of Tucker County, and that’s hard to do. For me, that’s the uniqueness of Tucker County. You really can’t capture it in one word. It’s eclectic, it’s diverse, the culture runs deep here — I mean, through generations. It doesn’t matter what nook or cranny you visit in this county, you’re going to learn something new. It’s pretty fascinating; it really is.”

— Diane Hinkle

INTRODUCTION

The History & Purpose of the Tucker County Cultural District Authority

Senate Bill 561 (Appendix A) was entered to establish the Tucker County Cultural District Authority. The Committee is authorized to promote the cultural, artistic, historical, educational and recreational opportunities available in Tucker County and thereby increase tourism and economic opportunities in the area.

The Tucker County Cultural District Authority is strengthened by a strong community-based support in Tucker County to encourage, develop, and enhance the various aspects of the cultural tourism component of the regional economy. Opportunities exist to create, expand and complement areas of cultural, historical, archaeological and industrial heritage and educational interest in Tucker County.

Early in our founding, we decided it was necessary to adopt a cultural tourism vision for Tucker County so that we could make informed, community-based decisions as cultural tourism developed. This document is a plan to accomplish that vision. Throughout the process, we have included input and participation with community stakeholders and residents to that we can lead tourism growth, but also preserve our County's culture, heritage, and authenticity.

To both lead tourism growth and maintain Tucker's authenticity, we have adopted four tenets which you will see reflected in this document: Protect, Connect, Enhance, and Promote. This Performance Agenda will be a guide as the Cultural District Authority begins working to achieve its vision of a community-led cultural tourism plan.

Tim Turner, Tucker County Cultural District Authority Board Member

INTRODUCTION

Methodology

With support from faculty at West Virginia University and a grant from the Benedum Foundation, the CDA board initiated a participatory planning process in the spring of 2016 to gather data from local stakeholders. Planning activities occurred from the spring of 2016 through the spring of 2017.

- In-depth interviews conducted with 32 key informants (Appendix A)
- Visitor survey conducted at various locations and festivals (Appendix B)
- Resident attitudes toward tourism survey distributed to all residents of Tucker County with a valid mailing address (3,621 addresses) with 637 surveys completed and returned for a 17.6% return rate. (Appendix C)
- Inventory and mapping of local cultural assets (Appendix D)
- Tourism business trends and impacts study conducted (Appendix E)
- Asset opportunity mapping and site design through a participatory process including site and opportunities development, design, and visualization for sites with strong potential for design of physical access to increase tourism identified through community workshops (Appendix F).
- Social design using ethnographic methods and design thinking tools to help identify ideas that address problems through participatory activities. Graphic design skills were utilized to visualize these ideas to see threads of connectivity and issues that still need resolved and establish a tone and attitude that can create solidarity with a designed identity and campaign of visual and verbal messaging (Appendix G)

Themes and strategies identified during these participatory activities were analyzed by the CDA board in order to establish the goals, objectives, and action strategies described in the performance agenda.

Douglas Arbogast, West Virginia University Extension Service Rural Tourism Specialist

Goals & Objectives



Photo Courtesy Joe Dumire

PROTECT

Protect

With the continued development of Corridor-H, Tucker County is experiencing some considerable change. It is more important than ever to ensure the protection of cultural, historical, and recreational resources of this county. We will need to develop strategies that allow community stakeholders to control development so that Tucker's towns and people, as well as its heritage, are respected.

The Cultural District Authority will be a resource for organizations across the County such as the Tucker County Historical Society, Alpine Heritage Preservation, or Friends of the Blackwater. Through formalized partnerships, we hope to facilitate ongoing coordination to protect assets such as the Potomac Stone, Cottrill's Opera House, and the Blackwater Canyon.

While it is important to provide positive, enjoyable experiences for our visitors, it is crucial to remember that Tucker community and Tucker culture must be honored, supported, and protected.

Dominic Piacentini, Tucker County Cultural District Authority AmeriCorps Member

Objectives

- **Actively support the preservation initiatives of the county's cultural resources - Establish partnerships with lead organizations in preservation initiatives. Creating and signing Memorandums of Understanding.**
 - Lead Organization: CDA
 - Action Steps:
 - Review & finalize MOUs with partners: May – April 2017
 - Develop a plan based on agreed-upon MOUs - board, AmeriCorps, & staff: May-June 2017
 - Develop communication channels with each partner - board & staff: June-July 2017, ongoing
 - Timeline: 1 year

- **Managed/Smart Growth - support land use regulations and a potential county planner/coordinator. Assist the Planning Commission and any county coordinators/organizers in development, by offering our resources and leveraging our partnerships.**
 - Lead Organizations: Planning Commission, Development Authority, & Municipalities
 - Partner: CDA
 - Action Steps:

PROTECT

- Engage planning commission with MOU on how CDA can actively support: Feb-April 2017
- Identify support plan & resources CDA can offer them: April-June 2017
- Timeline: Ongoing

“There is only so much development that really sustains a place, and if we get too much, [Tucker County] is going to lose its character. There's going to be development here, but, you're not going to see uncontrolled development.”

— Cary Reed

CONNECT

Connect

The Tucker County Cultural District will serve as a hub to visibly identify and connect the burgeoning opportunities offered by the performing arts; outdoor recreational activities; and, Tucker culture, history, archeology, industrial heritage and educational interests. Our residents and visitors enjoy the services and opportunities provided by individual entities in Tucker County. The Cultural District seeks to make the connections so that all of these amenities are part of a distinct, larger whole.

L.E. Herrick, Tucker County Cultural District Authority Secretary

Objectives

- **Act as a central hub for communication and resources for partner organizations**
 - Increasing coordination and collaboration among county organizations and residents. Develop a database of organizations, provide a network of resources on the website, and offer professional workshops for county organizations and businesses - beginning with a grant-writing seminar. Involving and connecting communities, organizations, and other stakeholders - organize meetings and events. Community liaisons - 5 municipalities and Canaan Valley
 - Lead Organization: CDA
 - Partners: Verglas Media (contractor), local Community Development Corporations
 - Action Steps:
 - Review & finalize MOUs with partner organizations: April 2017
 - Explore & apply for funding opportunities for staff capacity, cultural coordinator (staff): March/ April 2018
 - Secure funding for cultural coordinator: April – June 2018
 - Advertise, interview, & hire: July - August 2018
 - Introduce cultural coordinator to community: August – Sept. 2018
 - Develop plan to work with partner organizations: Sept. 2018
 - Execute plan: Oct. – Dec. 2018
 - Timeline: 1 year

- **Provide the historical organizations within the county a platform to display and promote online**
 - Develop pages on the www.tuckerculture.com site devoted to content provided by the Historical Society and the Historic Landmarks Commission.
 - Lead Organization: CDA
 - Partners: Verglas Media (contractor), TCHS, & Historic Landmarks
 - Action Steps:

CONNECT

- Confirmed that partners want to participate: Jan 2017
- Review and finalize MOU with partners: Feb/March 2017
- Develop content with Verglas to be sister site to CDA site: March/April 2017
- Roll-out sister sites: May 2017
- Ongoing maintenance as laid out in MOU: ongoing
- Timeline: 1 year

- **Coordination and support at state level**
 - Make sure state agencies are aware of legislation requiring them to support CDA activities
 - Lead Organization: CDA
 - Action Steps:
 - Development of informational postcard: Feb. 2017
 - Print postcard: Feb. 2017
 - Coordinate w/ board members on dissemination to state-level stakeholders: Feb-May 2017
 - Timeline: Ongoing

- **Community awareness of CDA**
 - Educating the public on CDA and engage more residents to participate in decision making
 - Timeline: Ongoing

*“We’re one county, one community, but like siblings,
each one has their own personality.”*

— .Anne Jones

ENHANCE

Enhance

The Tucker County Cultural District Authority (TCCDA) has established as one of its priorities the enhancement of cultural resources of Tucker County. Enhancement implies improving or building upon something. In this case, a resource developed from a history of agricultural settlements, timber and coal towns, outdoor recreation, and the arts — the many facets of our culture.

I see the role of the TCCDA as one of partner, facilitator, and sometimes leader in identifying and completing projects that will help enhance the cultural legacy we have been left. Many of these enhancement projects have a strong start thanks to community organizations. We want to assist these organizations to move the county's cultural legacy forward by offering them resources, guidance, and organizational capacity.

Just remember some things can't be improved upon, such as a night-sky view from a canoe on the Cheat River or the awe felt standing in front of the ever-impressive Blackwater Falls.

Brad Moore, Tucker County Cultural District Authority President

Objectives

- **Advance development of Cottrill's Opera House**
 - Background: Senate Bill 561 that created the CDA charges the board with the responsibility of planning and executing a program for the restoration and development of Cottrill's Opera House to preserve and enhance the building as a cultural, historical, and educational source of importance to the state.
 - Lead: CDA and AHP
 - Partners: NHT and City of Thomas
 - Action Steps:
 - Develop MOU among lead partners: April-May 2017
 - Identify top 3 funding priorities and assist with asset development plan: In progress
 - Create link to www.facebook.com/pages/Cottrills-Opera-House: May 2017
 - Timeline: 1 year

- **Develop design concept for Tucker County roadside welcome signs**
 - Background: At a February 2017 meeting of the Tucker County Commission, the CDA was approved to take the lead on "welcome to the County" signage at these locations:

ENHANCE

- Large: Rt. 48 (1) Tucker / Randolph
(1) Tucker / Grant County
- Small: Rt. 32 (1) Randolph / Tucker line
Rt. 90 (1) Tucker / Grant
Rt. 38 (1) Barbour / Tucker
Rt. 72 (1) Preston / Tucker
(1) Randolph / Tucker
Rt. 219(1) Garrett / Tucker
(1) Tucker/ Randolph
- Lead: CDA and Signs Committee
- Partners: WVU, Tucker County Building Commission, Tucker County Commission, CVB, DOH
- Action Steps:
 - Report previous research conducted on roadside signage and DOH requirements: Feb 2017
 - Collaborative meeting with CDA & WVU to draft design concepts: April-May 2017
 - Present a variety of design concepts to Building Commission, County Commission. Narrow options to 2-3: May-June 2017
 - Review and finalize design: July-Aug. 2017
 - Submit final design to County Commission and obtain DOH site approval: Sept. 2017
 - Bid contract for construction and installation: Sept. 2017
 - Installation: Fall 2017
- Timeline: 1 year
- **Support growth of the county trail system**
 - Background: Tucker County has a mecca of multiuse recreational trail systems. Some trail projects that are in development highlight the need for coordination of efforts. Resources and capacity are limited. A coordinator could seek grant opportunities, identify partners, and develop a plan to grow and improve the trail system. An improved trail system would have a positive economic impact on the county.
 - Lead: Tucker County Commission, CDA
 - Partners: HOH, USFS, DNR, CVR/BFSP, Blackwater Bikes, IMBA chapter Blackwater Bicycle Association, NHT, NYSF, FOB
 - Action Steps:
 - Advocate for access to Blackwater Canyon Trail: ongoing
 - Create County Trail Coordinator Position (see organizational chart).
 - Assess partner interest and level of support: March-April 2017
 - Develop position description with measurable outcomes: April-July 2017
 - Post and hire: Aug-Oct. 2017
 - Timeline: 2 years

ENHANCE

- **Pursue development of an indoor/outdoor recreation center**
 - Background: There is expressed interest from many individuals, businesses, and civic organizations for indoor recreation facilities to improve the quality of life and provide a safe, accessible environment for all ages and abilities. Tucker County is a recreation destination, especially for families with young children. Tucker County weather often dictates the need for indoor recreation, but options are very limited. There is an economic benefit to having an indoor recreational facility.
 - Lead: DNR / Blackwater Falls State Park; Town of Davis
 - Partners: CDA, Tucker County Commission, CVB, TC Development Authority, Planning Commission, TC Parks & Rec)
 - Action Steps:
 - Get Davis Center on the radar of state reps. Float ideas. Assess interest: Feb-May 2017
 - Determine feasibility; meet with DNR/ BFSP reps: March 2017
 - Assess community buy-in with Town of Davis, TCC, TCDA, PC, P&R: March-April 2017
 - Develop design concept: June-July 2017
 - Research funding opportunities: Fall 2017
 - Pursue funding: Winter & Spring 2017-18
 - Timeline: 2 years

- **Create Davis walking tour and wayside exhibits**
 - Background: Davis is rich in history. A walking tour and wayside exhibits improve the tourist experience and reflect a history that many residents remain connected to.
 - Lead: CDA
 - Partners: WVU (contractor), Davis Town Council, Davis Renaissance
 - Action:
 - Obtain approval Town of Davis for placement of wayside markers and implementation of walking tour: Feb-March 2017
 - Secure funding; resubmit State Humanities grant: Feb. 2017
 - Design development of historical wayside markers and walking tour: March-April 2017
 - Schedule lecture series; place wayside markers: May 2017
 - Develop plan for the ongoing maintenance and upkeep: Ongoing
 - Timeline: 1 year

PROMOTE

Promote

Many characteristics make Tucker County, West Virginia a singularly unique destination. The fact that there is but one “Tucker County” in the USA only confirms its rarity of character and distinctiveness in destination. There is an element of unrefined, unprocessed truth about Tucker County that is utterly undeniable and exceptionally rare: true in the way night skies aren’t washed out by city lights and quaint mountain towns are sprinkled with charm and diversity. Whether you’re coming to escape life, or to find it, Tucker County is that place.

In this high-mountain paradise, cool, uplifting breezes and spectacular natural features leave visitors elevated and inspired.

Tucker County is a true destination; visitors rarely stumble upon us. With more than half of the land being National Forest, Federal Wilderness, Fish and Wildlife Refuge, and State Park lands and located within a day’s drive of half of the US population making promoting Tucker County as high mountain experience close to you easier than ever.

Jessica Waldo, Tucker County Cultural District Authority Board Member

Objectives

- **Cultural website - finalize tuckerculture.com website**
 - Lead Organization: CDA
 - Partner: Verglas Media (contractor)
 - Action Steps:
 - Contractor to finish by the end of Feb. 2017
 - Review, Board: March 2017
 - Plan roll-out: March-April 2017
 - Roll-out website: May 2017
 - Website maintenance and updating – board, AmeriCorps, Verglas: ongoing
 - Timeline: 1 year

- **Make asset map available and continue to update - Publish the map on the www.tuckerculture.com site, and update map frequently. Develop print map guide**
 - Lead Organization: CDA
 - Partner: WVU (contractor)
 - Action Steps:
 - Complete map: 2016
 - Roll-out with website: May 2017
 - Maintenance and updates – board, AmeriCorps, WVU: ongoing

PROMOTE

- Timeline: Ongoing
- **Develop promotional brochures for the county's cultural assets - Continue development of brochures with WVU design students, finalize, and print.**
 - Lead Organization: CDA
 - Partner: WVU (contractor)
 - Action Steps:
 - Sample completed by WVU: Nov/Dec. 2016
 - Review and submit back to WVU to make changes: March 2017
 - Final proof review: April 2017
 - Print: April 2017
 - Distribute: May 2017
 - Timeline: 1 Year
- **Draft cultural tours and itineraries for the county - Create the itineraries and provide them online. Use story maps platform.**
 - Lead Organization: Historical Society & Historic Landmarks
 - Partner: CDA
 - Action Steps:
 - Finish MOUs including agreement to participate: March 2017
 - Form a committee comprised of the three parties: June 2017
 - Committee work to be completed over six months: June – Nov. 2017
 - Start refinement work on written itineraries: Jan – March 2018
 - Finalize approval through three boards: April 2018
 - Roll-out: May 2018
 - Timeline: 2 Years
- **Promoting TC culture through social media - post on accounts**
 - Lead Organization: CDA
 - Action Steps:
 - Create social media plan for Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube: June/July 2017
 - List who is responsible for content rotation
 - List themes for content
 - Establish content development schedule
 - President is responsible for maintaining timeline
 - Timeline: Ongoing
- **Cultural tourism events calendar - draft template developed by WVU School of Media**
 - Lead Organization: CDA
 - Action Steps:
 - Review development authority and CVB's activities to verify if one is needed: Oct/Nov. 2017
 - Review WVU platform and integration abilities with other platforms already in use: Dec./Jan. 2017-18

PROMOTE

- Inclusion into website and integration with other platforms: Feb - April 2018
- Development of promotion plan: Feb – April 2018
- Roll-out: May 2018
- Confirmation that calendar is operating: ongoing
- Execute promotion plan: ongoing
- Timeline: 1-3 Years

“We've certainly had a lot of former visitors that are now residents. They come up and they start a business. They know the uniqueness of this area. ... People realize the importance of preserving that uniqueness because that's what brought them here.”

— Matthew Baker

SUPPORT

The Tucker County Cultural District Authority has identified various, ongoing projects that it plans to actively support through formal partnerships, signed into effect through Memorandums of Understanding. The following are projects that the Cultural District Authority has identified; the projects the Cultural District supports, however, are not limited to this list alone.

Objectives

- **Support Cultural Entrepreneurship.**
 - Background: Vision Shared has developed an Entrepreneur Pitch Contest that could provide a funding opportunity for Tucker County entrepreneurs.
 - Lead: TCF, CDA, Vision Shared
 - Partners: TCDA, Woodlands, Tucker County Chamber, Grant County Bank
 - Action Steps:
 - Initiate entrepreneur pitch contest; Engage partners: Feb. 2017
 - Engage Vision Shared for a promotional plan: March 2017
 - Determine date, time, place: March 2017
 - Circulate applications. Engage minimum of 5 entrepreneurs: March-April 2017
 - Co-host event: May 2017
 - Develop an action plan for future contests: June-Aug. 2017
 - Timeline: 1 year

- **Support the Arts**
 - Background: Provide assistance to artists & arts-related businesses/activities. Provide assistance to the artists in developing a county-wide arts plan
 - Lead Organizations: ArtSpring, WV Highlands Artisans Guild, Mountain Arts District
 - Partner: CDA
 - Action Steps:
 - Review & finalize MOUs with partners: May-April 2017
 - Develop a plan based on agree-upon MOUs, board, AmeriCorps, & staff(?): May-June 2017
 - Identify funding needs and action items: June 2017
 - Develop communication channel, board & staff: June-July 2017, ongoing
 - Timeline: 1 year

- **Cultural events in the shoulder seasons - develop and manage events**
 - Lead Organization: Alpine Festival and ArtSpring
 - Partner: CDA
 - Action Steps:
 - Develop committee of partners to identify potential events during typical downtimes in tourism year: Fall 2017

SUPPORT

- Review potential options and funding opportunities for those events:
Winter & Spring 2017-18
 - Timeline: 1-2 years
- **Get more cultural activities into schools – basket making, quilts, stained glass, etc.**
 - Lead Organization: ArtSpring, WV Highland Artisans Guild
 - Partner: CDA (partner)
 - Action Steps:
 - Review & finalize MOUs with partners: May-April 2017
 - Identify funding needs and action items: June 2017
 - Develop communication channel, board & staff: June-July 2017, ongoing
 - Timeline: ongoing
- **Community beautification**
 - Lead Organization: Municipalities and CDCs
 - Partner: CDA
 - Action Steps:
 - Review & finalize MOUs with partners: May-April 2017
 - Identify funding needs and action items: June 2017
 - Develop communication channel, board & staff: June-July 2017, ongoing
 - Timeline: ongoing

“As with everything, growth needs to be managed, and that’s a part of the cultural district authority. It’s about that management — knowing what the resources are, making sure they’re not maxed out and developing additional resources so you have a general growth. The whole idea is to grow the pot, not try to figure out how to divide the one that’s here.”

— Robert Burns

PROJECT SITE DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT

The Tucker County Cultural District Authority has identified the following sites as priority projects; however, as many of these development projects are already underway by other community organizations, the CDA will be offering support and resources as we are able.

- Western Maryland Depot Park – Rail-trail wayside and interpretation
 - Lead Organization: Historical Society
 - Partner: CDA
- Riverfront Park (Thomas)
 - Lead Organization: New Historic Thomas
 - Partner: CDA
- Riverfront Park (Davis)
 - Lead Organizations: Davis Parks & Rec. and Davis Renaissance
 - Partner: CDA
- Alley-Park Access (Davis)
 - Lead Organizations: Davis Parks & Rec. and Davis Renaissance
 - Partner: CDA
- Canaan Valley Community Park – Planning at school site
 - Lead Organization: Canaan Valley Foundation
 - Partner: CDA
- Buxton & Landstreet Building (north-side trailhead)
 - Lead Organization: Friends of the Blackwater
 - Partner: CDA
- Spruce Street Revitalization
 - Lead Organization: New Historic Thomas
 - Partner: CDA
- Infill/Affordable Housing Planning & Design
 - Lead Organization: Woodlands Community Lenders
 - Partner: CDA
- Shavers Fork
 - Lead Organizations: City of Parsons and ProOnTRAC
 - Partner: CDA
- Fairfax Stone
 - Lead Organization: Blackwater Falls State Park
 - Partner: CDA

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Tucker County Cultural District Authority (CDA) would like to extend their thanks to all of the individuals and organizations that have supported body of this performance agenda and the incredible research that has been documented for the County.

First, we would like to thank Douglas Arbogast and his team at West Virginia University Extension Service. Because of his hard work and his many trips down to Tucker, we can present this comprehensive document. He, along with Peter Butler, Eve Faulkes, Jinyang Deng, and Daniel Eades, have provided the CDA with data that have helped us to understand Tucker's ongoing development better. These reports will prove to benefit this development significantly. The CDA is incredibly appreciative of all of the WVU students who participated in projects related to this project. They have provided the county with a wealth of material to incorporate into future planning, including tourism itineraries, thematic visitors' brochures, site designs, or identity branding.

Thank you to the Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation who believed this project to be worthwhile and to the Tucker Community Foundation for supporting the CDA's project vision. Now that we have this document and research, we are prepared to protect, connect, enhance, and promote Tucker County culture.

We are indebted to the ongoing engagement of Tucker County residents who filled out surveys, participated in interviews, and attended public work sessions. We hope that this document reflects you accurately and with respect. We would also like to thank the visitors of our county who took time out of their holiday to provide us with feedback on their experience with surveys.

We are also appreciative of Appalachian Forest Heritage Area and the volunteer service of Dominic Piacentini who assisted the Board of Directors in developing this document as well as supporting the projects listed within it.

We would like to thank our partner organizations who have worked alongside us in this endeavor and with whom we hope to accomplish much in the future. These partners include, but are certainly not limited to, the Tucker County Planning Commission, Tucker County Development Authority, Tucker County Convention & Visitors Bureau, New Historic Thomas, Tucker County Historical Society, Friends of the Blackwater, Heart of the Highlands, ArtSpring, Mountain Arts District, and Alpine Heritage Preservation, Inc.

Photo Courtesy Joe Dumire

Appendices

