



**West Virginia**  
*Wild and Wonderful*

Tourism Business  
Opportunity Assessment

**Richwood, West Virginia**



# Tourism Business Opportunity Assessment

Richwood, West Virginia

## Prepared for:

Richwood Scientific  
31 E. Main Street  
Richwood, WV 26261  
(310) 460-8379  
[www.richwoodscientific.com](http://www.richwoodscientific.com)

## Prepared by:

Downstream Strategies  
911 Greenbag Road  
Morgantown, WV 26508  
(304) 292-2450  
[www.downstreamstrategies.com](http://www.downstreamstrategies.com)

## About the Authors

**Sara Cottingham, M.S., Impact WV Fellow.** Ms. Cottingham concentrates on community and environmental planning and nonprofit organizational development. She earned a Master's in Community & Regional Planning and has worked with many nonprofits, ranging from small grassroots groups to regional and national organizations. She specializes in watershed management, grant writing, organizational assessment, community development, capacity building, fundraising, and volunteer management.

**Fritz Boettner, M.S., Principal.** Mr. Boettner has over ten years of professional experience in a wide array of environmental consulting activities. He has developed and managed complex environmental projects, including organizing resources, outlining project scopes, and developing and working within project budgets. He offers clients expertise in applying computer-based GIS systems, simulations, and animation. He utilizes GIS and computer visualization to complete projects at the local, regional, and national levels in the fields of planning, water resources, and environmental science. He also has experience performing complex spatial analysis to assist with natural resource management as well as providing GIS tools and support.

**Evan Hansen, M.S., Principal.** Mr. Hansen explores resource and environmental problems and solutions in three areas: water, energy, and land. He manages interdisciplinary research teams, performs quantitative and qualitative policy and scientific analyses, provides litigation support and expert testimony, develops computer tools, provides training, and performs field monitoring.

## ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report explores current and future opportunities for tourism business development in Richwood, West Virginia.

Using the context of the tourism value chain, this study:

- identifies marketable tourism products and attractions in the Richwood area,
- assesses the town's tourism capacity based on existing businesses and services,
- identifies gaps in Richwood's current tourism infrastructure, and
- outlines business-specific recommendations and next steps to develop and maintain a thriving tourism industry.

This study is one of a series of business opportunity assessments performed by Downstream Strategies for the Northern West Virginia Brownfields Assistance Center and the West Virginia Community Development HUB with regards to tourism development in specific West Virginia towns.

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Located on U.S. Route 39, the town of Richwood is the gateway to West Virginia's scenic highlands. Surrounded by the Monongahela National Forest, Richwood is the perfect launching point for hiking adventures in the Cranberry Wilderness, fishing the forks of the Cherry River and Summit Lake, and exploring the Highlands Scenic Highway.

The following recommendations to enhance Richwood's tourism products and services were identified in this report.

1. **Give visitors a reason to stop in Richwood** by offering downtown attractions, such as restaurants or shops.
2. **Clean up downtown buildings** by pursuing redevelopment and finding compatible businesses to occupy vacant spaces.
3. **Pursue trail development** in anticipation of planned bike trail and potential ATV development in the area.
4. **Improve basic services** to make Richwood a more enjoyable place to both live and visit.

These items are outlined in full in the Recommendations section, followed by resources for achieving these goals and actionable next steps for the town to pursue.

## ABOUT DOWNSTREAM STRATEGIES

Downstream Strategies is an environmental and economic development consulting firm located in Morgantown and Alderson, West Virginia. We are considered *the* go-to source for objective, data-based analyses, plans, and actions that strengthen economies, sustain healthy environments, and build resilient communities.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Summary of Findings.....	iii
About Downstream Strategies .....	iii
<b>TOURISM IN WEST VIRGINIA.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>COMMUNITY PROFILE: RICHWOOD.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>TOURISM VALUE CHAIN .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>COMMUNITY TOURISM ASSESSMENT TOURISM PRODUCTS OVERVIEW .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>TOURISM PRODUCTS ASSESSMENT .....</b>	<b>10</b>
Gaps identified.....	10
Business opportunities .....	10
Tourism service assessment.....	12
Business opportunities .....	13
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS.....</b>	<b>15</b>
1. Give visitors a reason to stop in richwood.....	15
2. Clean up downtown buildings .....	15
3. Pursue trail development.....	16
4. Improve basic services .....	17
<b>RESOURCES .....</b>	<b>18</b>
Small business development .....	18
Marketing and financing.....	19
Building redevelopment .....	19
Trail development .....	20
Arts development .....	20
<b>NEXT STEPS .....</b>	<b>21</b>
Tourism products .....	21
Infrastructure & basic services.....	21
Tourism services.....	21
<b>REFERENCES .....</b>	<b>22</b>

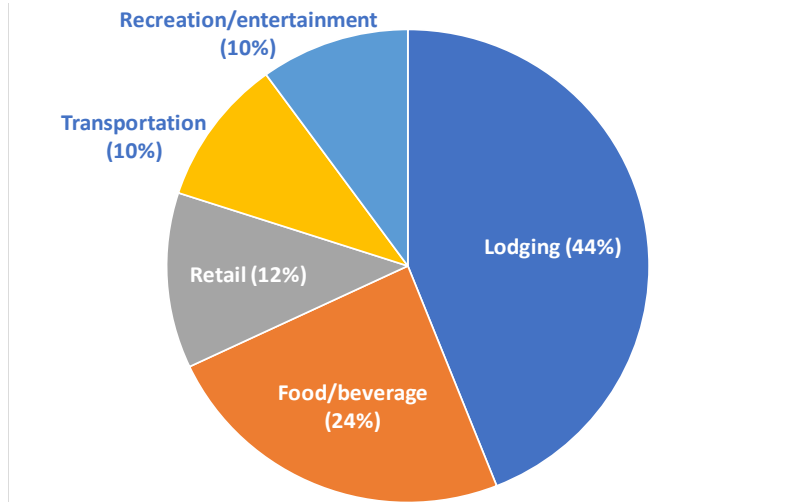
## TOURISM IN WEST VIRGINIA

**Tourism** is a growing industry in West Virginia. Trends at the statewide level show that increased investment in tourism development and promotion over the last five years have paid off (West Virginia Division of Tourism, 2016). Tourism added \$5.1 billion to the statewide economy in 2015. Nearly 16 million visitors stayed overnight in West Virginia in 2015. While 47% came to visit friends and relatives, 41% of overnight visitors came to the state on leisure trips influenced by marketing efforts (Longwoods Travel USA, 2015).

During their stays, visitors enjoy a range of activities such as shopping, dining, and visiting landmarks, parks, and historical sites. The average family/group spends a total of \$465 over the course of their stay, which averages 2.7 nights in length (Longwoods Travel USA, 2015).

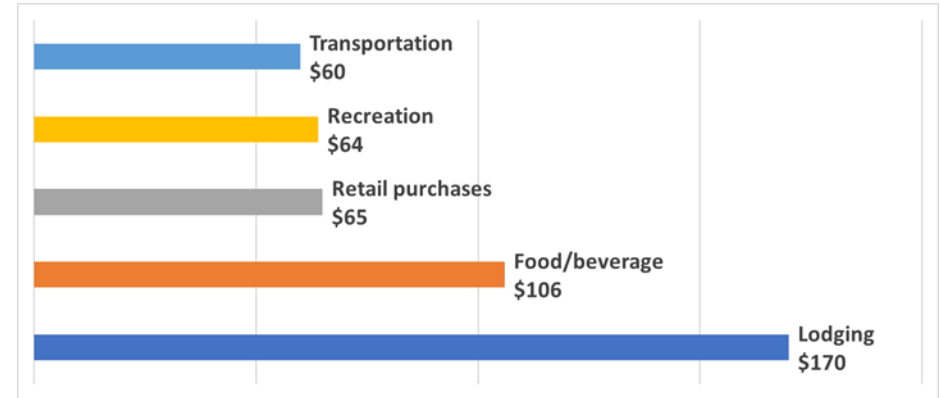
This direct spending has a significant impact on local economies, and, as a result, many towns across the state are evaluating how they can leverage local resources such as natural assets and cultural heritage into tourism products.

FIGURE 1: TOTAL OVERNIGHT SPENDING BY SECTOR IN WEST VIRGINIA (2015)



Source: Longwoods Travel USA (2015).

FIGURE 2: AVERAGE PARTY EXPENDITURES ON OVERNIGHT TRIPS TO WEST VIRGINIA



Source: Longwoods Travel USA (2015).

The single greatest driver of tourism in West Virginia is **outdoor recreation** (Longwoods Travel USA, 2015). West Virginia's mountains and rivers offer some of the best opportunities for outdoor recreation in the nation. As a four-season destination within a day's drive for half of the country's population, outdoor recreation tourism in West Virginia is poised to grow.



Source: West Virginia Tourism Office (2017).

Outdoor recreation generated \$9 billion in consumer spending in 2016, as well as \$2.4 billion in salaries and wages and \$660 million in state and local tax revenue. And with 91,000 direct jobs in the industry statewide,

outdoor recreation employs nearly twice as many West Virginians as the coal industry (Outdoor Recreation Association, 2017).<sup>1</sup>

**Cultural and heritage tourism** also plays a significant role in attracting visitors to the state: 45% of overnight visitors in West Virginia came to experience historic places and cultural activities in 2015 (Longwoods Travel USA, 2015).

Across the United States, 78% of all leisure travelers (118.3 million adults) participate in cultural and/or heritage activities while traveling. Cultural and heritage travelers spend an average of \$994 per trip and contribute more than \$192 billion annually to the U.S. economy (Mandala Research, 2009.). As baby boomers retire, the amount of heritage tourism (and overall travel expenditures) is expected to rise.

Compared with other types of travelers, cultural and heritage travelers are more frequent travelers and are more likely to participate in culinary activities, including visiting farmers' markets, attending food and wine festivals, and enjoying unique dining experiences. Table 1 shows the most common activities cited by cultural and heritage tourists.

**TABLE 1: PREFERRED ACTIVITIES BY CULTURAL AND HERITAGE TOURISTS**

Activity	Percent
Visiting historic sites	66%
Attending historic reenactments	64%
Visiting art museums and galleries	54%
Attending arts and craft fairs or festivals	45%
Attending professional dance performances	44%
Visiting state or national parks	41%
Shopping in museum stores	32%
Exploring urban neighborhoods	30%

Source: Mandala Research (2009).

With its rich history and unique mountain culture, West Virginia offers plenty of cultural and heritage attractions—from historic sites and parks to fine art and traditional crafts.

---

<sup>1</sup> The coal industry employed 48,000 people in 2015, including jobs in mining, contracting, and processing facilities (West Virginia Coal Association, 2017).

## COMMUNITY PROFILE: RICHWOOD

Richwood is a town of approximately 2,000 residents located in eastern Nicholas County. In its heyday, Richwood was a thriving lumber and coal town, supporting several wood-based product manufacturers, a strong banking sector, and a population that peaked at 10,000 residents in the 1920s. Richwood suffered major population losses over the last 30 years, however, as the town's factories and coal mines closed.

Today Richwood is home to 41 of the 575 businesses in Nicholas County (U.S. Census, 2015). Table 2 shows the largest employment sectors in Richwood.

**TABLE 2: LARGEST EMPLOYMENT SECTORS IN RICHWOOD**

Sector	Percent
Education and health services	34%
Retail trade	14%
Leisure and hospitality	13%
Manufacturing	11%

Source: U.S. Census (2015).

Most jobs and businesses in Nicholas County are concentrated near Summersville, the county seat, along U.S. Route 19. The county's largest employers are the Nicholas County Board of Education, Summersville Memorial Hospital, Columbia West Virginia, Inc., and Wal-Mart (Blueprint Communities, 2013a). Richwood's largest employers in recent years had been the Nicholas County Nursing and Rehabilitation Center and the local public schools (Tyson, 2016). However, the devastating 2016 flood closed the nursing home and destroyed Richwood's junior high and high schools. Richwood's schools are now facing the possibility of consolidation, which, if accomplished, would deal another blow to the town's already struggling economy.

Located within the Monongahela National Forest, Richwood is the gateway to some of West Virginia's most treasured landscapes. Nearly 100,000 people visit this area each year to enjoy some of the state's best-known attractions. Three tributaries of the Gauley River (Williams River, Cranberry River, and Cherry River) all flow within the forest near Richwood. Richwood lies in close proximity to the Highlands Scenic Highway, which begins where WV 150 meets WV 39. Other nearby

attractions include the Cranberry Glades Botanical Area (the southernmost Canadian bog in the world), the Cranberry Wilderness, and the Cranberry Mountain Nature Center, a popular visitor center run by the U.S. Forest Service.

Richwood's downtown is listed in the National Registry of Historic Places. The Cherry Tri-Rivers Rail Trail extends 16 miles from downtown Richwood along the Cranberry, Cherry, and Gauley rivers. The north and south forks of the Cherry River meet in Richwood, supporting a world-class trout fishery just outside of town. Nearby Summit Lake offers the only flat-water recreation in the immediate area.



Source: Kaycie Stusheck (2017).

With an abundance of mountains and rivers to choose from, Richwood has good access to a wide range of outdoor sports, including hiking, biking, swimming, cross-country skiing, fishing, whitewater kayaking and rafting. Richwood is home to several annual festivals, including the Scenic Mountain Triathlon, the Cherry River Festival, the Mountain Colors Art Show and Festival, and the Feast of Ramson.

## TOURISM VALUE CHAIN

The tourism value chain refers to the system of tourism-related products and services that enhance a town's or region's overall economy.

Tourism products comprise the specific destinations, attractions, and/or activities that visitors want to experience. Examples include trail systems, scenic rivers, ski resorts, historic parks, and cultural festivals.

Having a strong tourism product is essential in attracting visitors to a destination; however, it takes a number of supporting services to develop and sustain a tourism industry. When visitors travel to experience a tourist product, they likely interact with several different services within the community. For instance, a family embarking on a weekend river float trip would likely eat at a restaurant, buy fuel and snacks at a gas station, stay overnight at a hotel or campground, and perhaps rent a kayak or purchase gear at a local outfitter.

As a result, tourism development requires investment in basic infrastructure of tourism-supporting services that will serve and attract visitors. These standard tourism services include:

- **Lodging** – hotels, motels, bed and breakfasts, cabins, campgrounds
- **Food and beverage** – restaurants, grocery stores, food providers
- **Outfitters, tour, and guide services** – gear shops, rentals, shuttle services
- **Shopping and entertainment** – retail shopping and other activities

These standard services enhance a tourist destination from a visitor's point of view and stimulate the overall economy by providing tax revenue and by creating and supporting local jobs.

In addition to these primary tourism-related services, other associated services play a vital role in sustaining a viable infrastructure for tourism. For instance, a resort destination planning to attract large numbers of visitors each year will require an adequately-sized water and sewage treatment plant, waste management, and good roads in order to operate.

Local banks and insurance will be needed to serve the primary tourism services. These businesses will expect access to broadband internet, nearby emergency services, and schools for the children of their employees.

The associated and supporting services to the tourism infrastructure include:

- **Infrastructure** – buildings, water, wastewater, waste management
- **Transportation** – roads, railroads, bus service, gas stations
- **Telecommunications** – cell service and internet
- **Emergency and health services** - fire, police, ambulance, hospitals, pharmacies
- **Schools and training opportunities**

Most of these supporting services rely on the management or involvement of the town administration and/or local governing agencies. Involvement and buy-in from local and county leadership is therefore essential to the success of tourism development.



## COMMUNITY TOURISM ASSESSMENT

### TOURISM PRODUCTS OVERVIEW

Many marketable tourism products currently lie within Richwood and its immediate vicinity.

The **Cranberry Tri-Rivers Rail Trail** is a 16-mile trail spanning from downtown Richwood to the Cranberry, Cherry, and Gauley rivers. The trail offers stunning views of foliage, waterfalls, rivers, and a 640 foot-long railroad tunnel. The trail is slated for upcoming enhancement through a \$1 million grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission. The project will create a 500-mile network of linked biking trails in Fayette, Nicholas, and Greenbrier counties. This trail network will ultimately allow cyclists to bike from Richwood all the way to Mount Hope, linking the New River Gorge National River, the Monongahela National Forest, and all the existing mountain bike trail systems in between. As the trail's northern terminus, several miles of Richwood's Tri-Rivers Trail will be prioritized for improvement within the next 18 months.



Source: Kaycie Stusheck (2017).

**Summit Lake** is a 43-acre fishing lake with campground, restrooms, hiking trails, and non-motorized boat access. The lake is located ten miles east of Richwood and is the only flatwater paddling venue in the area.

The **Cranberry Glades Botanical Area** is the largest area of bogs (acidic wetlands) in West Virginia. At 750 acres, this spectacular and beautiful area was established by the U.S. Forest Service in 1965 to protect and

preserve over 60 unique plant species—many of them descended from seeds that took root here over 10,000 years ago.

Just north of the Cranberry Glades lies the **Cranberry Wilderness**. At 48,000 acres, the Cranberry is the largest wilderness area in the eastern U.S. The area includes 135 miles of hiking trails, making it one of the best backpacking destinations within easy driving distance for half of the nation's population. The scenery includes rugged mountains with streams, waterfalls, and swimming holes. Hardwood forests dominate the lower elevations, and spruce forests offer interesting variation on the peaks of the mountains.

Perched on the edge of Cranberry Mountain in the Monongahela National Forest on Highway 39/55 sits the **Cranberry Mountain Nature Center**. Operated by the U.S. Forest Service, the Nature Center features live programs, an exhibit hall, and audio-visual programs providing interpretation of forest ecosystems and local history. Noted guest speakers often visit with programs on wildlife, Indian folklore, and forest conservation.

The **Highland Scenic Highway**, a National Forest Scenic Byway, is the highest major roadway in West Virginia and extends 43 miles from Richwood to U.S. Route 219, seven miles north of Marlinton. The Highway follows State Route 39/55 for 21 miles from Richwood to the Cranberry Mountain Visitor Center. It then turns onto State Route 150 for the 22-mile Parkway section and rises from an elevation of 2,300 feet to over 4,500 feet. Four scenic overlooks located along the Parkway portion of the Highway provide spectacular views of the Allegheny Highlands. The Parkway is not maintained for winter travel, but the unplowed road is a popular destination for people on snowmobiles and cross-country skis.

**Special events in Richwood** include the annual Feast of Ramson ramp supper (April), the Scenic Mountain Triathlon (July), the Cherry River Festival (July/August), and the Mountain Colors Art Show & Festival (October).

**Key Tourism Activities** include fishing, hiking, biking, camping, hunting, cross-country skiing, and boating.

## TOURISM PRODUCTS ASSESSMENT

Richwood has a variety of high-caliber outdoor resources to attract visitors and has good potential to further develop its outdoor recreation opportunities.



Source: Kaycie Stusheck (2017).

### Gaps identified

Richwood's existing tourism products cater mostly to outdoor recreation activities. While these are strong products linked to the area's natural assets, the town would be well served to diversify into other types of tourism products, such as arts and cultural heritage attractions.

### Business opportunities

**Biking trails:** In June 2017 The Appalachian Regional Commission, in collaboration with the West Virginia Division of Highways, awarded a \$1 million grant to create a 500-mile network of linked bike trails in Fayette, Nicholas, and Greenbrier counties. Once completed, the **Southern West Virginia Bike Trail Network** will traverse sections of the Monongahela National Forest, the New River Gorge National River, Babcock State Park, and other key recreational areas.

Richwood's Cranberry Tri-Rivers Rail Trail has been identified as a key section of the Southern West Virginia Bike Trail Network. The trail will start in downtown Richwood and will include the first 3-4 miles of the Cranberry Tri-Rivers Trail to Fenwick. Once completed in mid-2020, bikers will be able to ride all the way from Richwood to Mount Hope in Fayette County.

This project poses a major opportunity for bike tourism in Richwood. By linking to the nationally renowned biking trails in Fayette and Greenbrier counties, this project could set Richwood on the path to become a premiere biking destination in the state. As a result, opportunities abound for creating additional bike trails, particularly those geared toward mountain biking in the Richwood area.

**ATV trails:** Several feasibility studies have explored Richwood's viability as an all-terrain vehicle (ATV) and utility task vehicle (UTV) trail destination. The most recent study, completed by Thrasher Engineering in 2016, explored the creation of a **Central West Virginia Trail** system in Braxton, Clay, Fayette, Nicholas, and Webster counties, using Richwood as the central hub for the trail network. The study determined that Richwood is ideally situated for trail tourism and identified numerous favorable locations for trail development in and around Richwood. If developed, this trail system has the potential to bring significant tourism to Richwood over the next decade.

The trail planning team has met with Jeffrey Lusk, executive director of the Hatfield McCoy Regional Recreation Authority, who is supportive of the trail's creation and has offered advice to the planning team. The team has met with several potential landowners who have expressed moderate support for the project.

While the West Virginia Legislature has approved funding for the initial feasibility studies for the Central West Virginia Trail, it has not yet approved the creation of a regional recreation authority to operate a trail system. In addition to establishing a trail authority, investors will be needed to spur its development by funding private trail networks, resorts, and supporting businesses in the tourism value chain. Assuming the project

receives strong support from the Legislature, the Governor’s office, and the West Virginia Division of Tourism, the project could become a reality within five years.

**Art and cultural products:** Survey responses and interviews with town residents identified interest in pursuing arts, cultural, and heritage tourism, including ideas for a hardwoods museum and an artisans’ cooperative (Blueprint Communities, 2013b). Richwood’s Main Street Alliance is currently working on developing an artisans’ co-op in a downtown building. Based on the success of other arts organizations and cooperatives in the state and region, an artisans’ cooperative would enhance Richwood’s cultural offerings and promote opportunities for local artists to collectively market their work to visitors.

The Pocahontas County Artisans Co-op (PCAC) offers a promising model that would be applicable to Richwood. Located in neighboring Pocahontas County, PCAC is a business incubator, assisting regional artisans in advancing from hobby to cottage industry. The collective features the work of 30 member-artists at its galleries in Marlinton (open year-round) and Cass (open seasonally). PCAC also holds public demonstrations, workshops, exhibitions, and community-based educational activities throughout Pocahontas County (Pocahontas County Artisans Co-op, 2017).

Table 3 and Table 4 outline the primary and supporting tourism services existing in Richwood.

**TABLE 3: PRIMARY TOURISM SERVICES**

Service type	Description	Assessment
Lodging/accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hotels/motels (1): Four Seasons Lodge</li> <li>Rentals (3): Camp Splinter Lodge and two smaller cabin/guest house rentals</li> <li>Campgrounds (1): Summit Lake</li> <li>Several additional guest house rentals are currently in the process of opening.</li> </ul>	<p><b>STRENGTH:</b> Based on conversations with the Richwood Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB), the Four Seasons Lodge currently has strong occupancy ratings during the summer and fall and often reaches 100% occupancy during the peak fall leaf season.</p> <p><b>GAPS:</b> Visitation is highly seasonal, with peaks in the summer and fall and lags in the winter and spring. The Four Seasons Lodge reduces the number of rooms available during the winter months.</p>
Food/dining	<p><b>Restaurants:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CB's Hole in the Wall Pizza</li> <li>Dairy Queen</li> <li>Fenwick Diner</li> <li>Oakford Diner</li> <li>Whistlepunk Grill &amp; Taphouse (<i>planned</i>)</li> </ul> <p><b>Groceries:</b> No grocery store in town. Limited groceries available locally.</p>	<p><b>GAPS:</b> Richwood’s existing restaurants are not a major tourist draw. The CVB reported that visitors often have trouble locating restaurants in town and are not sure whether the establishments are open. The lack of a grocery store poses an issue for tourism as well.</p>
Tours/services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Four Seasons Adventure Sports offers outdoor gear for sale, plus gun repair and game processing. Four Seasons also offers guided hunting and fishing trips.</li> <li>Cranberry Adventures offers backcountry fishing and camping trips with a mule team.</li> </ul>	<p><b>GAPS:</b> Once the Southern West Virginia Bike Trail Network is complete, Richwood will need more services supporting bike tourism, including a retail/service shop.</p>
Shopping/entertainment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rosewood Floral &amp; Antiques (new)</li> <li>Thrift store</li> </ul>	<p><b>GAPS:</b> There are very few retail stores open in Richwood.</p>

**TABLE 4: SUPPORTING TOURISM SERVICES**

Service type	Description	Assessment
Infrastructure	<p><b>Buildings:</b> Richwood has a number of abandoned buildings in its downtown. Dilapidated and nuisance buildings pose a major issue for the town; however, progress has been made since the 2016 flood in taking down “problem” buildings.</p> <p><b>Water/wastewater:</b> The 2016 flood damaged Richwood’s water intake and sewage treatment infrastructure. The town has since made necessary infrastructure improvements.</p>	<p><b>STRENGTH:</b> The availability of buildings will be an asset for Richwood’s business development moving forward. The city also has the overall infrastructure capacity to support growth.</p>
Transportation	<p>Route 39/55 is the main road connecting Richwood with Routes 19 and 219. Richwood is a 30-minute drive from Summersville and a two-hour drive from Charleston, the nearest city with a population greater than 50,000. The Mountain Transit Authority provides bus service between Summersville and Richwood. A small nearby airport, Richwood Municipal Airport, serves small aircraft but has no commercial airlines.</p>	
Telecommunications	<p>Excellent broadband access is available. Most providers have moderate cell coverage, with the exception of Verizon, which does not have reception in Richwood.</p>	<p><b>STRENGTH:</b> Whereas many small towns in West Virginia struggle with adequate broadband access, Richwood has excellent internet access and cell service.</p>
Emergency/health services	<p><b>Emergency:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Richwood Police Department</li> <li>• Richwood Volunteer Fire Department</li> <li>• Redi-Care Ambulance service in town</li> </ul> <p><b>Medical:</b> Richwood Family Practice and Summersville Regional Medical Center (Summersville)</p>	<p><b>GAPS:</b> Richwood’s local hospital closed in 2008. The nearest health care providers are located 30 minutes away in Summersville and two hours away in Charleston. Richwood residents surveyed through the “Reboot Richwood” HubCAP report listed an improved medical facility among the top needs for their community (Blueprint Communities, 2013).</p>
Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cherry River Elementary</li> <li>• Richwood Junior High (closed from 2016 flood)</li> <li>• Richwood High School (closed from 2016 flood)</li> <li>• Nicholas County Career &amp; Tech Center (Craigsville)</li> <li>• New River Community College (Summersville)</li> </ul>	<p><b>GAPS:</b> Richwood’s middle and high schools were both destroyed in the 2016 flood. The town is currently fighting the county’s plans for school consolidation, which it feels would have a devastating impact on the town.</p>

**Tourism service assessment**

Though Richwood meets the minimum requirements of the primary tourism services, it lacks a robust chain of services to support its tourism products. The town has made many infrastructure improvements to local roads and its water/wastewater systems; however, many improvements are needed in several key service areas to sustain a tourism industry and meet the basic needs of the town’s residents.

While Richwood abounds in outdoor attractions, the town has relatively few tour service providers and outfitters. The town has limited food and dining options and lacks a grocery store with fresh produce and meat. Richwood has virtually no retail shops. As a result, it currently offers little reason for pass-through travelers to stop on their way through town. The Richwood CVB also identified a lack of overnight accommodation space for visitors during the peak tourist seasons of summer and fall.

While many small rural communities struggle to get adequate broadband internet access, Richwood is one of the only small towns in West Virginia to sport 100 mbps—speed internet coverage.<sup>2</sup>

The town also has a variety of buildings that, with some work and renovation, could provide plenty of space for new businesses. The presence of solid building infrastructure coupled with internet and cell service could open doors for future developments in the tech field; however, many of the basic improvements listed in this report would be needed in order to make the town attractive as a location for outside companies.

### Business opportunities

**Lodging:** Based on current visitation of nearby tourism attractions and Richwood’s current visitation estimates from the CVB, Richwood could currently support additional overnight lodging space for visitors—mainly in the peak summer and fall seasons. This need will likely increase based on the degree to which existing and proposed tourism products are marketed. The planned bike and proposed ATV trails have the potential to significantly increase local lodging demand over the next ten years.

In the short term, business opportunities in overnight accommodations exist in two key areas.

- **Home and cabin rentals:** With the tremendous growth of websites such as Airbnb, VRBO, and HomeAway, home vacation rentals are becoming an increasingly popular source of visitor accommodations worldwide. Richwood currently has several cabins and homes available as vacation rentals, and several more are in the process of forming as of the time this report was prepared.<sup>3</sup> Rather than renting out individual rooms in the style of a hotel or bed and breakfast, these whole-house vacation rentals are popular with large groups and are feasible in places

like Richwood that have available housing stock and relatively low real estate prices.

- **Campgrounds:** Summit Lake currently provides the only campground space in the immediate Richwood area. Campgrounds, which can range in offerings from tent/RV camping to cabins, often require minimal infrastructure compared to traditional hotels/motels, which can be cost-prohibitive as start-ups. Campgrounds often offer a higher rate of return on investment than cabins because initial capital requirements are much smaller. The campground aesthetic often appeals to outdoor enthusiasts coming to take part in outdoor sports in the area. Hikers, backpackers, and mountain bikers often prefer low-cost camping options, whereas ATV, UTV, and motorized recreation enthusiasts exhibit greater preference for higher-end camping facilities.

Given the potential for ATV and bike trails to dramatically increase visitation to Richwood, the demand for additional resorts and higher-end campgrounds may very well rise over the next 5-10 years. Feedback from several major ATV trail systems confirms that many of West Virginia’s key trail areas, including the Hatfield-McCoy Trails and Ashland Resort, struggle to supply enough full-service campground hook-ups to meet their clientele’s demand. Feasibility studies and full market analyses should be prepared once tourism levels increase and additional data is available.

**Outdoor recreation:** Given the abundance of outdoor recreation opportunities in the area, Richwood has the potential to support an increased variety of services including guiding services and private systems for ATVs and mountain bikes.

- **Trails:** Private trail systems have a proven track record of success in West Virginia. While the Hatfield-McCoy Trail System in southern West Virginia is well known, other smaller private trail

<sup>2</sup> The average internet speed in West Virginia is 31.1 mbps. [www.internetchoice.org](http://www.internetchoice.org)

<sup>3</sup> Based on conversations with the Richwood CVB.

- systems such as the Big Bear Lake Family Camplands in Bruceton Mills may provide better models for start-up businesses. Big Bear Lake started as a family-run campground and is now one of the premiere mountain biking destinations in northern West Virginia. Other examples such as the Kingdom Trails in northern Vermont offer promising models of nonprofit trail organizations that have revitalized remote, rural region by attracting 94,000 mountain bikers to the trails annually. Given the existing interest in ATV trail development and the planned expansion of biking trails, the development of private trail areas poses a promising business opportunity for Richwood and its surrounding area.
- **Guides and outfitters:** Given the abundance of outdoor recreation opportunities in and near Richwood, the area could likely support additional outdoor guide services related to fishing, hiking, biking, hunting, cross-country skiing, and boating. The demand for these services will likely increase based on the degree to which existing and proposed tourism products are marketed. The planned bike and proposed ATV trails have the potential to make Richwood a major trail center that could support a range of bike and ATV services, including shops offering rentals, repair services, and guided rides.

**Food/dining:** Richwood is a small town with some existing tourism; however, many more travelers pass through the town on their way to other nearby destinations. This places Richwood in an ideal location for food service providers to reach this pass-through market. Once the Southern West Virginia Bike Trail Network is completed (est. 2020), the demand for restaurants and food providers will increase noticeably. This offers a promising opportunity for a restaurant/eatery, ideally on Main Street, that caters to cyclists and trail users, as well as a grocery store for visitors and residents alike.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

With the development of Route 19 and the growth of Summersville, Richwood has struggled to hold on to its economic base. This struggle, however, could very well be turned into an opportunity. Richwood's relative isolation from development and sprawl has left it surrounded by incredible forests, parks, and other natural resources. These resources make Richwood a great destination for people seeking solitude and adventure in nature and provide a variety of tourism products for the town to market and pursue.

In addition, Richwood's location on Route 39/55 situates it well for increasing tourism. Though Richwood does have an existing tourism base, many more visitors pass through downtown on their way to other destinations such as Snowshoe, the Scenic Highway, and Pocahontas County. This presents Richwood with a major opportunity to capitalize on pass-through traffic.

### 1. GIVE VISITORS A REASON TO STOP IN RICHWOOD

While visitation figures for Richwood were not available at the time this report was prepared, an estimated 50,000 people pass through Richwood each year on their way to other nearby destinations.<sup>4</sup>

This gives Richwood access to a captive market of potential visitors. The key, however, is that the town must offer a compelling reason for those travelers to stop in Richwood instead of continuing on to other towns. A simple place to start would be through downtown development. A new restaurant/eatery would give travelers powerful incentive to stop for a meal, and nearby downtown shops, such as an artisans' cooperative gallery, would be a further draw.

Richwood should also improve signage to help visitors find existing restaurants and services.

---

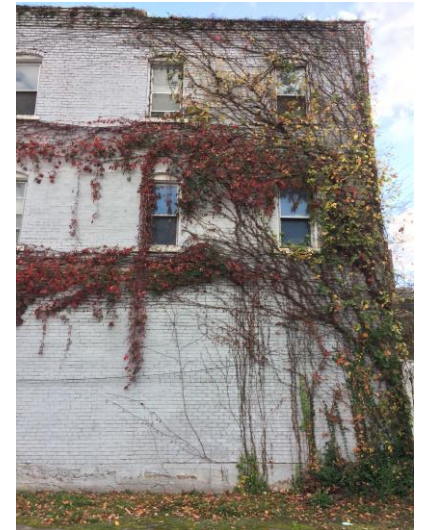
<sup>4</sup> Estimate from the Richwood CVB based on the number of visits recorded at the nearby Cranberry Mountain Visitor Center.

## 2. CLEAN UP DOWNTOWN BUILDINGS

In revitalizing its downtown, Richwood will need to address its dilapidated buildings. When asked in a 2013 community survey what would most improve the quality of life in Richwood, residents most frequently cited tearing down dilapidated buildings and beautifying downtown (Blueprint Communities, 2013b).

Richwood has a considerable number of abandoned, dilapidated, and brownfields buildings that have blighted the community.<sup>5</sup> Blighted areas negatively impact communities by increasing infrastructure costs, posing safety and environmental hazards, demoralizing communities, and slowing economic development. Addressing blight through redevelopment of nuisance buildings and downtown beautification can have a demonstrable impact on a community: it makes communities safer, more inviting places that are more likely to encourage new business development, job creation, and investment. Improvements to downtown will thus make Richwood more appealing to both visitors and prospective businesses alike.

Richwood had a building inventory prepared several years ago that prioritized buildings for development. After the 2016 flood, over 100 homes and buildings with widespread damage were removed, thus altering the status and priority of buildings identified in the building inventory. This inventory should be revised in order to direct future redevelopment efforts. This inventory could be completed with the help of the Mill Creek Development Group and the Northern West Virginia Brownfields Center (see Resources section).



Source: Kaycie Stusheck (2017).

<sup>5</sup> No firm estimates were available at the time this report was prepared; however, one source estimated 90% of the homes and businesses in town are currently vacant.

The majority of storefronts and buildings in downtown Richwood have now stood vacant for decades. One potential strategy for both occupying storefronts and cleaning up downtown could be to mirror the success of Nelsonville, Ohio (pop. 5,000), a historic coal-mining community that subsidizes downtown storefront rent for artist-retailers. Over a period of five years, artists cleaned up downtown storefronts, brought the town's downtown square back into economic productivity, and increased downtown occupancy rates from 25 percent to 85 percent (Lambe, 2008).

Other relevant case studies relevant to Richwood include:<sup>6</sup>

- **Chimney Rock, North Carolina**, (pop. 175), which spurred the creation of new businesses with a downtown makeover to give visitors to a nearby park a reason to visit the town.
- **Star, North Carolina** (pop. 800), which repurposed an abandoned mill into a business incubator for local artisans and small business entrepreneurs.
- **Etowah, Tennessee** (pop. 3,600), which developed tourist products, downtown retail, a hospitality industry, and industrial employers in a rural, mountain setting.<sup>7</sup>

### 3. PURSUE TRAIL DEVELOPMENT

Trail development offers the most promising path for bringing substantial long-term tourism growth to Richwood. With the Southern West Virginia Bike Trail System planned to open by 2020 and a promising potential for ATV trails within the next five-to-10 years, future tourism services should target cycling and motorized sports traffic.

First, Richwood should develop a committee of local trail enthusiasts to advocate and encourage local trail development. Second, the town and

committee should create a comprehensive trail plan to inventory local trails, create maps, establish trail management and monitoring protocols, explore liability issues, and identify future funding sources for trail expansion and improvements. The plan should also identify needed trail infrastructure for Richwood to pursue, such as information sources for pre-trip planning, trail maps, signage and information kiosks, community bike paths and bike routes, and a variety of additional bike-friendly conveniences. Consulting firms are available to assist in preparing such plans.

The infrastructure required to create a welcoming, bike-friendly community can involve significant capital costs. These projects should be identified in the community's overall trail plan and in other public infrastructure planning initiatives. Often local businesses and community organizations will help support such initiatives for their social and economic benefits (Mountain Bike Tourism, Destination BC, 2015).

The Southern West Virginia Bike Trail alone is projected to generate a total of \$3 million in new tourism revenue in Fayette, Nicholas, and Greenbrier counties, plus \$350,000 in additional sales tax income each year. To tap into this potential tourism revenue, however, Richwood must invest in and enhance its offerings to bike tourists (New River Gorge Regional Development Authority, 2017).

In the short term (three-to-five years), Richwood should pursue the creation of the following tourism services:

- Bike service shops;
- Biker-friendly restaurants, cafes, and eateries;
- Campgrounds; and
- Trailside amenities and improvements.

---

<sup>6</sup> Case studies are available in "Small Towns, Big Ideas: Case Studies in Small Town Community Economic Development" (Lambe, 2008).



#### 4. IMPROVE BASIC SERVICES

For tourism to take off in Richwood, the town must invest in basic services to improve the quality of life for its residents.

Investing in local capacity-building and basic services such as infrastructure are often vitally important to spurring economic development in small towns (Lambe, 2008). As a result, community building in Richwood must go hand-in-hand with tourism and other economic development.

A 2013 survey of town residents by the Richwood Blueprint Communities Team identified several basic services that would improve quality of life for its residents, including:

- reducing crime and drugs,
- improving medical facilities,
- building a multi-use gym,
- creating a homeless shelter,
- providing city-wide Wi-Fi,
- improving roads, and
- Launching a farmers' market or community garden (Blueprint Communities, 2013b).

Though framed in the context of quality-of-life improvements, each of the 13 items listed by town respondents would help make Richwood both a more attractive place to visit as well as a more enjoyable place to live. These improvements will thus make the community more appealing to businesses that might consider forming or relocating in Richwood.

Many of the items relate to improving downtown as a destination for both locals and visitors. Addressing dilapidated buildings and beautifying downtown were two of the most frequent items given by respondents. Community leaders and the HubCAP Initiative should confirm these community preferences through additional surveys and town meetings and target improvement projects accordingly.

Other major factors that should be addressed in Richwood are the lack of a grocery store and the looming potential of school consolidation that would close Richwood's junior high and high school.

## RESOURCES

Richwood will need targeted assistance in many areas as it seeks to attract and develop new tourism-related businesses and services.

### SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

First-time entrepreneurs in rural communities often start at a disadvantage. In West Virginia, as in much of rural America, those coming from geographically isolated, economically depressed areas may not have been exposed to thriving local businesses. Without experienced local mentors, they may find themselves lacking the basic understanding of management, accounting, and marketing principles needed to start and run a successful business.

As a result, training and technical assistance are vital for supporting business development. To encourage new businesses to form in Richwood, the town will need to develop a local education and training infrastructure to provide advice and encouragement to budding entrepreneurs.

Many resources are available.

- **The U.S. Small Business Administration's (SBA's) West Virginia District Office** in Clarksburg provides prospective, new, and established persons in the small business community with financial, procurement, management, and technical assistance. The SBA provides training and counseling on starting and/or expanding businesses, assists bank and non-bank lenders in securing SBA loans for their small business customers, and provides trainings for small businesses on how to do business with the federal government. (SBA, 2017)
- **The West Virginia Small Business Development Center (SBDC)** is a statewide network that provides assistance in all 55 counties. SBDC helps small businesses from the concept phase to established enterprises and offers training in business planning and development, coaching, financing recommendations, and more. SBDC can help compile all of the preliminary information and paperwork needed to open a business legally, including

information on licensing, taxes, insurance, recordkeeping, and the forms needed for hiring employees. SBDC can also assist with evaluating a business idea for feasibility and projected success and can provide hands-on assistance in obtaining loans. SBDC has a business coach/manager based in Summersville and periodically offers trainings and workshops in Nicholas County. (WVSBDC, 2017)

- **The New River Gorge Regional Development Authority (NRGRDA)** offers small business support in the areas of finance, employee and labor resources, environmental permitting, zoning, state and local taxes, existing government programs, training, media coverage, and more. NRGRDA offers a business coach to support small businesses free of charge and manages its own revolving and micro-loan programs. (NRGRDA, 2017)
- **The Hive Network** is a regional business accelerator located in Beckley, West Virginia. The Hive provides mentoring, coaching, technical assistance, and support tools to aspiring business owners. (West Virginia Hive, 2017)
- **HubCAP**, the West Virginia Community Development Hub's Communities of Achievement Program, offers support for communities as they take their community development efforts to the next level. The Hub's staff serve as coaches, connecting the community with capacity building resources needed to achieve the town's goals. Richwood is currently a HubCAP community. (HubCAP, 2017)

In addition, training and mentoring opportunities specific to hospitality and outdoor recreation industries are recommended.

- **West Virginia University (WVU) Extension** offers a tourism specialist who coordinates the WVU Rural Tourism Design Team. The Team provides research, training, and technical assistance support for sustainable rural tourism development throughout West Virginia. Partnerships with Recreation, Parks, and Tourism Resources; Landscape Architecture; Graphic Design; Public Administration; and other colleges and departments at WVU

provide a depth of knowledge and expertise strategically targeted to support the development of a sustainable tourism economy in West Virginia. (WVU Extension, 2017)

- **West Virginia Welcome**, designed by the West Virginia Hospitality Education and Training Program, is a collaboration between WVU's Hospitality and Tourism Program, West Virginia Department of Education's HEAT program, the West Virginia Hospitality and Travel Association, and the WVU Extension Service. The program offers introductory courses on hospitality, available as a 45-minute online video course and through two-hour classroom-style trainings. (WVU Extension, 2017)

## MARKETING AND FINANCING

Richwood has many existing tourism products to draw from; however, these products will need to be marketed more effectively in order to increase visitation. The Richwood CVB websites need to be updated and modernized, and the town needs assistance marketing the town and area tourism products through regional and statewide partnerships. The CVB should consider making a promotional video to highlight Richwood's attractions. The McDowell County CVB website offers a good model for both overall website design and promotional video (McDowell County CVB, 2017).

Substantial marketing efforts will be needed to attract private backers to invest in developments such as private trail systems, resorts, and other larger-scale recreation products and services. These efforts will require buy-in and support from the Legislature, the Governor's office, the West Virginia Division of Tourism, and other statewide and regional partners.

Richwood should identify potential marketing partners that would be willing to collaborate with Richwood. Some potential partners include:

- West Virginia Division of Tourism,
- Richwood CVB and Chamber of Commerce,
- Southern West Virginia CVB,
- NRRDA,
- Pocahontas County CVB,

- Snowshoe Mountain Resort,
- Monongahela National Forest and the Cranberry Mountain Nature Center,
- Pocahontas County Visitors Centers, and
- Cass Scenic Railroad.

## BUILDING REDEVELOPMENT

A wide variety of resources are available to help address abandoned, dilapidated, and brownfields buildings in Richwood.

- **West Virginia Brownfields Assistance Centers** promote economic development and environmental and public health protection through innovative redevelopment of brownfield sites. The Centers promote and coordinate the development of brownfield properties by providing training and technical assistance, facilitating site preparation efforts, engaging community involvement, as well as by helping communities with grant writing and leveraging project funding. (WVBAC, 2017)
- **The BAD (Brownfield, Abandoned, Dilapidated) Buildings Program** is a West Virginia statewide initiative run through the Northern West Virginia Brownfields Assistance Center. The program provides technical assistance and site analysis tools to enhance abandoned and dilapidated building programs. Failure to address BAD buildings imposes severe social and economic costs on neighborhoods. This program helps to identify, prioritize, and redevelop such buildings. The BAD Buildings Model and resources support West Virginia communities with limited local capacity and no abandoned/dilapidated buildings program. The program works with communities, generally at no cost, to create a complete building inventory and prepare a comprehensive redevelopment plan based on inventory findings. Applications for technical assistance provided through the program are accepted annually. (WVBAC, 2017)
- **Mill Town Community & Economic Development Corporation** is a new nonprofit dedicated to promoting economic diversification in Richwood and bringing new jobs and

opportunities to the area. The organization will be a resource for connecting local entrepreneurs with trainings and assistance programs. (Raffo, 2017)

## TRAIL DEVELOPMENT

The Region 4 Planning and Development Council is the leading entity behind the Southern West Virginia Bike Trail Network project. Working in concert with NRGRDA, West Virginia Division of Highways, and Active Southern West Virginia, project leaders will spend the next two-and-a-half years designing and constructing a regional network of trails in Nicholas, Fayette, and Greenbrier counties.

Local and regional resources for this project include:

- Region 4 Planning and Development Council,
- NRGRDA,
- West Virginia Division of Highways,
- Active Southern West Virginia,
- New River Gorge Trail Alliance, and
- Greenbrier River Trail Association.

Resources and case studies for bike trail development in other rural areas are available.

- **Haywood County, North Carolina** – this rural county in western North Carolina has developed bike tourism into a major economic engine that brings an estimated \$14 million economic impact to the region each year (Kostelec Planning, 2015).
- **Trail Town Program (Maryland/Pennsylvania)** – this initiative works in small rural towns across western Pennsylvania and western Maryland, focusing on community and economic development around trail tourism and outdoor recreation. The purpose of the program is to ensure that trail communities and businesses maximize the economic potential of the regions trails. The program supports five bike trails: The Erie to Pittsburgh Trail,

the Great Allegheny Passage Trail, the Montour Trail, the Sheepskin Trail, and the Trans-Allegheny Trails. (Trail Towns Program, 2017)

- **Kingdom Trail Association (Vermont)** – this nonprofit created and maintains the Kingdom Trails mountain bike system in northern Vermont. The Kingdom Trails have become one of the premier mountain bike trail destinations in the U.S. and attract 94,000 mountain bikers to the region annually. (Kingdom Trails, 2017)

## ARTS DEVELOPMENT

Many resources are available for developing arts and heritage tourism in Richwood.

- **The Tamarack Foundation for the Arts** supports artists and creative entrepreneurs in West Virginia. It offers business training, education, financial assistance, mentorship, and networking opportunities to help artists thrive in the creative economy. The Foundation runs the West Virginia Creative Network, a statewide platform to connect artists with fellow artists and creative career opportunities, and is developing a Creative Business Incubator. (Tamarack Foundation, 2017)
- **The West Virginia Division of Culture and History** directs grant programs and offers technical services to artists, arts organizations, schools, and nonprofits across the state to help create an environment for creative expression and appreciation for the arts. The Division coordinates the West Virginia Certified Arts Community and the Certified Historic Preservation Community programs, which designate communities that have taken steps in supporting the arts and historic preservation. (West Virginia Division of Culture, 2017)
- The Pocahontas County Artisans Co-op (PCAC) is a business incubator, assisting regional artisans in advancing from hobby to

- cottage industry. The collective features the work of 30 member-artists at its galleries in Marlinton (open year-round) and Cass (open seasonally). PCAC also holds public demonstrations, workshops, exhibitions, and community-based educational activities throughout Pocahontas County. (PCAC, 2017)

## NEXT STEPS

### Tourism products

- Create a committee of local trail advocates to spearhead trail planning and outreach efforts in anticipation of the Southern West Virginia Bike Trail System.
- Develop a comprehensive bike plan to outline the management of the local bike trail section and inventory trail infrastructure and tourism needs.
- Continue pursuing the creation of and allocation of funding for a regional recreation authority governing the proposed Central West Virginia Trail system.
- Establish collaborative marketing relationships with statewide and regional partners to better advertise Richwood's tourism services.
- Modernize the Richwood CVB and Chamber of Commerce websites.
- Conduct a visitor study to develop baseline data at Richwood's current level of visitation.

### Infrastructure & basic services

- Apply for assistance through the BAD Buildings Program to:
  - update Richwood's existing building inventory to reflect changes since the 2016 flood and
  - develop a downtown beautification program.
- Use market data (including the findings in this report) to attract investment.
- Pair the revised building inventory with potential new businesses outlined in this report.

- Revisit the 2013 survey data and collect additional data on basic services sought by town residents, and prioritize accordingly.
- Consider adopting the Downtown Appalachia Program model as a resource for continued redevelopment.

### Tourism services

- Promote business opportunities and conduct full market studies for potential tourism services, including:
  - bike service shops;
  - biker-friendly restaurants, cafes, and eateries;
  - campgrounds; and
  - trailside amenities and improvements, as identified in the comprehensive bike trail plan.
- Coordinate with available small business development resources to determine how to best connect Richwood residents with business development and support services and hospitality and tourism-specific job preparedness trainings.
- Facilitate mentorship, marketing, and hands-on, ongoing business support to ensure the viability of new business initiatives.



Source: NRGRDA (2017).

## REFERENCES

- Blueprint Communities. 2013a. Population, Economic & Data Trends 1980-2010 for Richwood, WV.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2013b. Reboot Richwood: The Community Plan for the City of Richwood, West Virginia.
- Destination BC. 2015. Mountain Bike Tourism: The essential guide to developing, managing and marketing mountain bike tourism product in BC. <http://www.destinationbc.ca/getattachment/Programs/Guides-Workshops-and-Webinars/Guides/Tourism-Business-Essentials-Guides/Mountain-Bike-Tourism-TBE-Destination-BC.pdf.aspx>
- Kingdom Trails. 2017. About. [www.kingdomtrails.org](http://www.kingdomtrails.org)
- Kostelec Planning. 2011. Haywood County Comprehensive Bicycle Plan. Prepared for BicycleHaywoodNC and the Haywood County Recreation and Parks Department. <http://bicyclehaywoodnc.org>
- Kostelec Planning. 2015. Bikes in Beds: How to maximize bicycle tourism in Haywood County and Western North Carolina.
- Lambe, Will. 2008. Small Towns, Big Ideas: Case Studies in Small Town Community Economic Development. Prepared for the Community & Economic Development Program School of Government, University of North Carolina. [http://www.iog.unc.edu/programs/cednc/stbi/pdfs/stbi\\_final.pdf](http://www.iog.unc.edu/programs/cednc/stbi/pdfs/stbi_final.pdf)
- Longwoods Travel USA. 2015. Overnight Visitor Study: West Virginia.
- Mandala Research. 2009. The Cultural and Heritage Traveller, 2009 Edition Report of Findings.
- McDowell County Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB). 2017. Home. <http://meetmcdowell.com>
- New River Gorge Regional Development Authority, 2017 (NRGRDA). What we do. <http://nrgrda.org/what-we-do/>
- Outdoor Recreation Association. 2017. West Virginia Outdoor Industry Factsheet. <https://outdoorindustry.org/>
- Pocahontas County Artisans Co-op. 2017. Welcome! [www.pocahontasartistry.com](http://www.pocahontasartistry.com)
- Raffo, S. 2017. Director, Mill Town Community and Economic Development Corp. Personal communication with author Cottingham. October 12.
- Tamarack Foundation for the Arts. 2017. [www.tamarackfoundation.org](http://www.tamarackfoundation.org)
- Trail Town Program. 2017. Where we work. <https://www.trailtowns.org/where-we-work/>
- Tyson, Daniel. 2016. Richwood citizens express concern. The Register-Herald. June 26, 2016.
- U.S. Census. 2015. County Business Patterns. <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/cbp.html>
- U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). 2017. West Virginia District Office. <https://www.sba.gov/offices/district/wv/clarksburg>
- West Virginia Brownfields Assistance Centers (WVBAC). 2017. <http://wvbrownfields.org/>
- West Virginia Division of Culture and History. 2017. [www.wvculture.org](http://www.wvculture.org)
- West Virginia Hive. 2017. Small business incubation for West Virginia. <https://wvhive.com/>
- West Virginia Small Business Development Center (WVSBDC). 2017. <http://wvsbdc.com>
- West Virginia Division of Tourism. 2016. Annual Report.
- West Virginia University (WVU) Extension. 2017. Extension Service. <https://extension.wvu.edu/>