

Town of Sutton Economic Development Strategic Plan

August 13, 2007



Created By:



Town of Sutton Strategic Plan

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I. Introduction and Background

Description of Town

The Town of Sutton is the county seat of Braxton County, near the geographic center of West Virginia. Braxton County was formed from Nicholas, Lewis and Kanawha Counties in 1836 and was named in honor of Carter Braxton, a signer of the Declaration of Independence. The town was named for John D. Sutton, who owned most of the land where the town is located, including the log house which held the first county court. The first inhabitants of the territory that now embraces Braxton County were the Carpenters. Four of the Carpenter brothers had been in the Revolutionary Army. They settled at the mouth of Holly River about 1790. Benjamin, the youngest brother, and his wife were murdered by Indians in 1792. It was reportedly the last Indian raid in central West Virginia. Adam O'Brien, Indian scout and hunter, helped to make the first survey of land in the territory in the summer of 1784. The survey began at a poplar tree standing in the low gap at the head of Grannys Creek. This land included the territory upon which Sutton and Gassaway now stand, and extended for several miles down Elk River.

The Sutton Lake project was authorized by Congress in the Flood Control Act of 1938. Construction began in October 1949, but was interrupted by the Korean War. Work restarted in 1956 and in the dam was finally completed in 1961. The lake is currently used for flood control but is also great draw for recreational purposes such as boating, fishing, and swimming.

Today, Sutton is known as a quite little town nestled along side the scenic Elk River. Visitors flock to Sutton for its annual film festival at the Landmark Studio as well as to the renowned restaurant, Café Cimino. As the County seat, Sutton is also the home of the county courthouse and many of the administrative and managerial services provided to county resident are found there. The downtown comprises many historic buildings which are included in a historic district and are listed on the National Register of Historic Places, including the Braxton County Jail.

Planning Process

In 2003 the Sutton Community Development Corporation participated in the development of a Historic District Master Plan for the downtown area of the Town of Sutton. The completed plan provided many useful recommendations for downtown improvement projects. In order to begin to bring that plan to life the Economic Development Committee for the Town of Sutton developed this strategic action plan to identify and prioritize key projects in the downtown that support economic development and encourage growth and revitalization. This plan works together with existing documents such as the Master Plan in order to chart a course towards the overall betterment of the Town of Sutton.

The creation of this plan was guided by a steering committee made up of the members of the Economic Development Committee. An initial meeting was held with this group to determine the planning process, identify issues, and set key milestone dates. The group was also responsible for helping to approve, advertise, and distribute the public opinion survey. The public opinion survey was the first data collection step in the planning

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process and was used to identify and prioritize issues in the community. The next step in the planning process was to complete an analysis of current issues and trend using existing data and the results of a public opinion survey. Those findings are summarized in the Trend Analysis section of this document.

Once the survey and trend data was collected and analyzed a public meeting was held to review the survey findings and other additional socioeconomic data compiled for the plan. The results of the public meeting are summarized in the Public Involvement section of this document.

The trends analysis, steering committee, and public input were then used to form the foundation for the creation of goals, objective, and strategies which are outlined in the plan. Also included in the document is an implementation schedule for carrying out the plan recommendations. The steering committee reviewed a draft version of the plan and provided comments prior finalization.

II. Trend Analysis

A. Demographics

The total population of Sutton according to the 2000 Census is 1,011. This figure reflects a growth in population of eight percent since 1990. Braxton County recognized significant growth (13 percent) in population between 1990 and 2000. This is a much higher growth rate than that of the state as a whole over the same period. Out of the 55 counties in West Virginia, Braxton ranked within the top ten counties experiencing the greatest population increase from 1990 to 2000. The only municipalities in the county that did not experience population increases in that time period were Burnsville and Gassaway. Exhibit 1 compares the population growth in Sutton with Braxton County and the State.

**Exhibit 1
Population Change in Sutton, Braxton County,
and West Virginia, 1990 – 2000**

Area	Total Population		Numerical Change	% Change 1990-2000
	1990	2000		
Sutton	939	1,011	72	8
Braxton County	12,998	14,702	1,704	13
West Virginia	1,793,477	1,808,344	14,867	1

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; Terrell Ellis & Associates

Population Projections

The increases in population are projected to continue over the next decade, however, at a much slower rate of growth than has previously been experienced. Exhibit 2 shows the

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projected population for the County through 2020. These projected growth rates for the County continue to be higher than those projected for the overall state. According to the U.S. Census Bureau the state is projected to have little growth (0.11%) from 2005-2010, no growth from 2010-2015, and slight population loss (-0.5%) from 2015-2020. Population projections were not available for the Town of Sutton.

**Exhibit 2
Braxton County Population Projections, 2010-2020**

Year	Total Population of County	Percent Change
1990	12,998	
2000	14,702	13.11
2005 (estimate)	14,858	1.06
2010 (projection)	15,045	1.26
2015 (projection)	15,187	0.94
2020 (projection)	15,291	0.68

Source: West Virginia Regional Research Institute; Terrell Ellis & Associates

Age Distribution

As evidenced in Exhibit 3, the age distribution in Sutton varied only slightly during the ten-year period between 1990 and 2000. These changes are mirrored in the county and statewide data for the same period. Sutton experienced the greatest decline in its younger population segment, particularly in persons between the ages of 5 and 44. Declines in this category are most likely indicative of young people leaving the area upon graduation to seek higher education and/or job opportunities outside the area.

Increases were seen in the older segments of the population. Based on the 2000 Census over 50 percent of the population is over 45.

**Exhibit 3
Age of Population in Sutton, 1990-2000**

Age	Population			
	1990	% of Total	2000	% of Total
Under 5 years	47	5	55	5
5 to 24 years	250	27	215	21
25 to 44 years	257	27	226	22
45 to 64 years	194	21	319	32
65 years and older	191	20	196	20
Total	939	100	1,011	100

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; Terrell Ellis & Associates

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The largest population growth in the town between 1990 and 2000 was in the 45-64 year old age group. This growth is consistent with county and statewide trends. The median age for the town (45.6 years) is much higher than that of the state (38.6 years). The median ages are slightly lower in the other municipalities (based on the 2000 Census):

- Burnsville - 41.5
- Flatwoods - 39.0
- Gassaway - 45.1

This data indicates an aging population in the town that will only increase over time.

Racial Composition

As shown in Exhibit 4 Sutton has a very small minority population which reflects the overall county racial characteristics. While the populations are small, decreases were experienced in the Black or African American category and the Asian, Native Hawaiian, and Other Pacific Islander category. The growth in the “Some other race” category may be explained by differences in the 1990 and 2000 census forms.

**Exhibit 4
Population by Race in Sutton compared to Braxton County, 1990 – 2000**

Race	Sutton				Braxton County			
	1990	% of Total	2000	% of Total	1990	% of Total	2000	% of Total
White	922	98.2	989	97.8	12,905	99.3	14,514	98.7
Black or African American	13	1.4	5	0.5	46	0.4	120	0.8
American Indian and Alaska Native	1	0.1	3	0.3	17	0.1	129	0.9
Asian, Native Hawaiian, and Other Pacific Islander	1	0.1	0	0	23	0.2	30	0.2
Some other race	2	0.2	14	1.4	7	0.1	21	0.1
Total	939	100.0	1,011	100.0	12,998	100.0	14,702	100.0

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; Terrell Ellis & Associates

Summary

- The town of Sutton has experienced moderate population growth over the last decade.
- Braxton County is experiencing population growth at rates much higher than statewide averages. The county is one of the top ten counties in the state in population growth over the 1990-2000 period. The population growth is projected to continue through 2020 at rates higher than the overall state, however, these rates will not be as high as those experienced between 1990 and 2000. Beginning in 2010 the growth rate will remain constant but begin to decline.
- The age distribution of the current population in the town indicates that the majority of the population is aging in place. Issues related to senior citizens and social services for the elderly may become even more prevalent as the current population moves towards retirement age.

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- Racial minorities do not make up a significant portion of the population at the town or county level.

B. Income Distribution

Households and Household Income

The total number of households in Sutton in 2000 was 470. This is an increase of 14% (59) over the 1990 level of 411. See Exhibit 5. This growth is in line with the county, and is positive in comparison to other counties across the State that recognized declines in the number of households. The average household size declined slightly, but kept pace with statewide trends.

**Exhibit 5
Sutton, Braxton County, and West Virginia Household Trends, 1990-2000**

Area	Households		Household Size	
	1990	2000	1990	2000
Sutton	411	470	2.24	2.14
Braxton County	4,950	5,771	2.61	2.46
West Virginia	500,259	736,481	2.55	2.40

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; Terrell Ellis & Associates, Inc.

In 1990, the majority of household incomes in Braxton County were \$10,000 or less. However, by 2000 household incomes had increased with the largest share of households making between \$15,000 and \$24,999. Although Exhibit 6 depicts the dramatic increases in the number of households in the upper income categories, starting at \$50,000 and up, it also reflects that more than half of the County’s households earn incomes less than \$25,000.

In 1999, the median household income (HHI) in Braxton County was \$24,412 whereas the median household income for Sutton was \$25,134. Both the town and the county showed increases in median HHI from 1989 when the levels were \$18,606 and \$16,359, respectively. The HHI for the County continues to increase as estimates provided by the U.S. Census show a level of \$26,717 for 2003.

**Exhibit 6
Household Income Distribution in Sutton, 1990-2000**

Income	1990		2000		% Change
	Total HH	% of Total HH	Total HH	% of Total HH	
< \$10,000	95	23.2	102	22.1	7.4
\$10,000-\$14,999	70	17.1	49	10.6	-30.0
\$15,000-\$24,999	105	25.7	78	16.9	-25.7
\$25,000-\$34,999	38	9.3	59	12.8	55.3
\$35,000-\$49,999	56	13.7	58	12.6	3.6
\$50,000-\$74,999	37	9.0	68	14.8	83.8
\$75,000-\$99,999	4	1.0	28	6.1	600.0
\$100,000-\$149,999	4	1.0	11	2.4	175.0
> \$150,000	0	0	8	1.7	800.0

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; Terrell Ellis & Associates

Per Capita Personal Income

Per capita personal income (PCPI) levels have also been increasing at both the County and state levels. In 1999 the PCI for West Virginia was \$20,279. In 2004 the PCI for the state increased to \$25,792, indicating an annual growth rate of 4.5 percent. This level is higher than the U.S. PCPI growth rate of 3.4 percent for the same period. Braxton County fared even better than the state and national averages with a growth rate of 4.8 percent over the 1999-2004 period. In the county the PCPI rose from 14,736 in 1999 to 18,653 in 2004. While this growth is positive, compared to the other counties in the state Braxton county still ranks low in PCPI and was considered 46th out of 55 (West Virginia Economic Outlook 2007, WVU College of Business and Economics).

Poverty and Self Sufficiency

The percentage of person living below poverty in Sutton has increased since 1989. This trend is different from that of the rest of the County and the state which has seen a decline in poverty in the same period. Exhibit 7 shows the percentage of the population which is considered to be below poverty for the town, county, and the state. It is important to note that these percentages are much higher in the town and county than the rest of the state.

**Exhibit 7
Percentage of Population below Poverty Levels in Sutton, Braxton County,
and West Virginia, 1989-2003**

Year	Sutton	Braxton County	West Virginia
1989	15.2%	25.6%	19.2%
1999	19.7%	22.0%	17.9%
2003	N/A	19.9%	16.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; Terrell Ellis & Associates

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In 2007 the West Virginia Bureau of Employment Programs (BEP) calculated self sufficiency standards for the state and its counties. The standard is a measure of how much income is required for a family of a particular structure in a particular location to satisfactorily meet its fundamental needs without public or private assistance. Based on the BEP calculations the self sufficiency standard for Braxton County would be \$14,792 annual or \$7.00 hourly for one adult and \$36,171 annual (combined) or \$8.56 hourly (per adult) for two adults and two school aged children. These figures are slightly lower than the statewide standard of \$15,849 annual or \$7.50 hourly for one adult and \$39,205 annual (combined) or \$9.40 hourly (per adult) for two adults and two school aged children (WVBEP, 2007).

Summary

- The number of households in the town is growing while the average household size is decreasing. This trend is consistent with state and national averages.
- HHI and PCPI levels are steadily increasing at the County and state levels, and the HHI of Sutton exceed the rest of the County. Braxton County, however, continues to lag behind the rest of the counties in the state in these categories.
- Poverty continues to be a problem for a significant portion of the population in the town and percentages have increased from 1989.
- A living wage in Braxton County would be considered to be \$14,792 annual or \$7.00 hourly for one adult and \$36,171 annual (combined) or \$8.56 hourly (per adult) for two adults and two school aged children. This is much lower than the current 2003 PCPI (\$18,653) for the County. However for families it is much higher than the current 2003 median HHI of \$26,717.
- Household incomes have increased significantly during the past ten years, indicating that perhaps local individuals have more money to spend and/or invest in their local community. However, as research indicates, there are still many families with marginal incomes, which reinforce the need for high-paying jobs that provide benefits for employees.

C. Economy

Braxton County has a healthy and growing local economy. Exhibit 8 compares job trends by major industry for Braxton County in 1990 and 2000. The County's major increases are in arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services. Tourism related jobs increased 734 percent, while 170 jobs were lost in the retail field. While this loss unfortunately may reflect declining downtown retail trade industries, Braxton County has recognized significant growth especially in the Flatwoods interchange area. It should also be noted that the Census Bureau has shifted food service and lodging from the retail category and placed it into Arts/Entertainment/Recreation/Food Service and Lodging, a fact which may also explain the significant fluctuation. Although tourism related jobs are important to the local economy, they traditionally are not jobs with high wages or benefits.

Significant growth (99.3 percent) was recognized in the professional scientific, management, administrative and waste management services category. Sizable growth

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was also recognized in the areas of construction (36.2 percent) and manufacturing (21.4 percent). All of these categories typically offer high paying positions and employee benefits.

**Exhibit 8
Earnings by Major Industry in Braxton County, 1990-2000**

Category	1990	2000	% Change
Agriculture	150	332	121.3%
Construction	470	640	36.2%
Manufacturing	351	426	21.4%
Wholesale Trade	89	201	125.8%
Retail Trade	813	643	(20.9%)
Transportation and public utilities	410	494	20.5%
Information	--	64	--
Finance, insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing	138	111	(19.6%)
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services	139	277	99.3%
Educational, health and social services	689	899	30.5%
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	44	367	734.1%
Government	139	332	138.8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; Terrell Ellis & Associates, Inc.

Based on data provided by the WV BEP from March of 2006 the following business are the top employers in the County:

1. Braxton County Board of Education (Sutton)
2. Weyerhaeuser Corporation
3. Braxton County Memorial Hospital
4. Go-Mart, Inc.
5. Braxton County Senior Citizen Center, Inc.
6. Caregiving & Advocacy for the Rural Elderly, Inc. (Sutton)
7. Mountain Cap of West Virginia (Sutton)
8. Central WV Aging Service, Inc. (Sutton)
9. John Skidmore Development, Inc. (Sutton)
10. Coastal Lumber Company

Labor Force

Braxton County has experienced a fairly steady labor force since 1999 with unemployment declining during that period and the overall unemployment rate staying at levels consistent with the rest of the state. The labor pool in the County is also skilled and educated with almost half of the population graduating high school and 25 percent completing at least some collegiate level education.

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**Exhibit 9
Braxton County Labor Force Statistics, 1999-2005**

Braxton County	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Civilian Labor Force	5,330	5,860	5,720	5,900	5,990	5,890	5,950
Employed	4,780	5,430	5,340	5,450	5,550	5,540	5,600
Unemployed	550	430	380	450	450	350	350
Unemployment Rate	10.3	7.3	6.6	7.6	7.4	5.9	5.8

Source: WV BEP; Terrell Ellis & Associates

Retail Sales

Retail sales are an important component of the local and regional economy. Based on Economic Census Data Braxton County experienced growth in retail sales revenue from 1997 to 2002 and remained fairly constant in the number of retail establishments. These trends are comparable to Braxton's neighboring counties which all experienced increases in sales revenue except Clay County which declined slightly. The adjacent counties also all lost retail establishments between 1997 and 2004 except for Webster which remained constant. Of all the neighboring counties Nicholas County had the largest number of retail establishments and highest revenue in 2004, however, Upshur County had the largest increase in retail sales (55%) over the period.

**Exhibit 10
Retail Sales in Braxton County and Surrounding Region, 1997 -2004**

	Retail Trade	Braxton	Calhoun	Clay	Gilmer	Lewis	Nicholas	Upshur	Webster
2002	Establishments	86	27	31	24	80	120	95	32
	Sales (\$1,000)	123,859	25,325	36,474	26,010	149,870	267,385	240,478	31,623
1997	Establishments	87	29	33	25	89	139	101	32
	Sales (\$1,000)	111,123	20,729	37,899	23,432	143,578	213,706	155,231	31,192

Source: Economic Census, US Census Bureau; Terrell Ellis & Associates, Inc.

Summary

- The County's major economic increases are in arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services sectors. Such tourism-related jobs are important to the local economy; however are not typically high-wage earning positions.
- Significant growth (99.3%) was recognized in the professional scientific, management, administrative and waste management services category. Sizable growth was also recognized in the areas of construction (36.2%) and manufacturing (21.4%). These sectors generally provide much higher wages than tourism-related industries.
- Retail sales have increased in the county and remain competitive with neighboring counties.
- Unemployment and unemployment rates have been declining since 1999 and the County has a strong labor force of skilled and educated workers.

D. Housing

Housing in Sutton varies in terms of age and condition. According to the Census, 80.5% of the housing stock is at least 25 years old. However, during the past ten years there have been an additional 86 single-family housing units built in the community. This figure significantly outpaces statewide trends.

**Exhibit 11
Number of Housing Units in Sutton, Braxton County,
and West Virginia 1990-2000**

Place	1990	2000	% Change
Sutton	474	560	18%
Braxton County	5,708	7,374	29%
West Virginia	781,295	844,623	8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; Terrell Ellis & Associates, Inc.

The most dramatic change in the housing market is demonstrated by the increase in the housing values in the town. In 2000, the median house value was \$62,400, a significant increase over the median value of \$46,300 declared in 1990. This figure lags behind the state median house values of \$72,800.

The median mortgage value in the town in 1990 was \$486 per month, this value increased to \$592 per month in 2000. The median rent for the County over the same period was \$270 per month in 1990 and \$347 in 2000. These figures are slightly lower than the corresponding statewide averages.

Housing Stock Characteristics

The majority of the housing stock in the County is considered to be single-family detached housing. Approximately 23 percent of all units in the town are considered multi-family units; this segment of the housing market has also seen the greatest increase over the past decade. Manufactured and mobile housing makes up approximately ten percent of the total housing stock in the County, a rate which is lower than the county and state average.

**Exhibit 12
Housing Units and Structure Types in Sutton, 1990-2000**

Units and Structure Type	1990		2000	
	Total	% Total	Total	% Total
Total Housing Units:	474	100.0	560	100.0
1, detached	317	66.9	359	64.1
1, attached	5	1.0	18	3.2
2 to 4	59	12.5	73	13.1
5 to 9	25	5.3	34	6.1
10 or more	18	3.8	19	3.4
Mobile home, trailer, or other	50	10.5	57	10.2

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; Terrell Ellis & Associates, Inc.

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Approximately 50 percent of the housing stock in the town was built before 1940. This indicates an extremely old housing stock but also the potential historic value of a lot of the structures in the town. New residential construction is not occurring as rapidly in Sutton as the other portions of the County. See Exhibit 13.

**Exhibit 13
Housing Unit Age in Sutton and Braxton County, 2000**

Age	Sutton		Braxton County	
	Total	% Total	Total	% Total
Built 1999 to March 2000	2	0.4	231	3.1
Built 1995 to 1998	30	5.4	655	8.9
Built 1990 to 1994	20	3.6	621	8.4
Built 1980 to 1989	57	10.2	1,332	18.1
Built 1970 to 1979	62	11.1	1,439	19.5
Built 1960 to 1969	64	11.4	748	10.1
Built 1940 to 1959	154	27.5	1,095	14.9
Built 1939 or earlier	171	30.5	1,253	17.0

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; Terrell Ellis & Associates, Inc.

Vacancy

The homeownership rate in Sutton in 2000 was 61.5 percent. This rate is lower than both the county and state rates for the same period. As shown in Exhibit 14 vacancy rates for both homeowners and renters have fluctuated at the municipal and county levels between 1990 and 2000. The county and all municipalities experienced increased in homeowner vacancy rates from 1990 to 2000 with the exception of Flatwoods which showed a slight decrease. In comparison, the rental market fared somewhat better over the same period with vacancy rates going down in all areas except Flatwoods which experienced a slight increase. Overall the town vacancy rates much higher than both the county and statewide averages.

**Exhibit 14
Housing Occupancy in Sutton and Braxton County compared to
West Virginia, 1990 – 2000**

Area	Homeowner Vacancy Rate		Rental Vacancy Rate	
	1990	2000	1990	2000
Sutton	3.3	8.0	15.8	13.0
Braxton County	1.8	3.1	9.0	7.6
West Virginia	2.2	2.2	10.1	9.1

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; Terrell Ellis & Associates, Inc.

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Summary

- Braxton County is experiencing growth in housing at a rate faster than statewide averages but this is not occurring in Sutton.
- Homeownership rates are lower than county and state averages.
- Rental vacancy rates are declining within the town but homeowner vacancy rates are rising and both rates are higher than the rest of the county.
- The majority of the housing stock in the town is greater than 50 years old and there have not been many new houses built within the last decade.

E. Transportation

Located in the heart of West Virginia, Braxton County is conveniently situated along Interstate 79. The County is located within 500 miles of 60 percent of the population of the United States, enabling Braxton County businesses to reach their markets quickly, efficiently and within a reasonable budget. The County is located within one hour of the State Capitol and one to two hours from other major urban areas of the state.

The intersection of two major highway systems is located in Braxton County. Interstate 79 is a major north-south transportation corridor providing direct access to the ports on the Great Lakes. In Morgantown, I-79 intersects with I-68, a link to most major arteries on the eastern seaboard. Forty miles north of Morgantown I-79 connects with I-70, which runs through the Midwest and ties in with all major highway networks in the northeast. In Charleston, I-79 intersects with I-77 and I-64, opening the area to the south and Midwest.



West Virginia Division of Tourism; Terrell Ellis & Associates, Inc.

The county is also the northern terminus for U.S. Route 19 (the major route through Sutton), or Appalachian Corridor D, which has recently been upgraded to a four-lane highway. U.S. Route 19 connects I-79 and I-64/I-77 at Beckley.

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The following data reflects average daily traffic (ADT) counts gathered at various points on these highways in 2006 and earlier. These traffic counts reflect a steady increase in the I-79 area in Braxton County. Over the last several years the area of U.S. Route 19 around Sutton has experienced a decrease in ADT; however, this is consistent with statewide trends that show an overall decrease in ADT.

**Exhibit 15
Highway Traffic Counts (Per Day), 1997-2006**

Location	1997 ADT	2003 ADT	2006 ADT
Interstate 79 – Between US 19 and (Exit 57) and WV 4 (Exit 62)	16,500	20,000	24,000
Interstate 79 – Between WV 4 (Exit 62) and US 19 (Exit 67)	16,500	20,000	22,000
Interstate 79 – Between US 19 (Exit 67) and WV 5 (Exit 79)	16,000	21,500	22,500
U.S. Route 19 – North of Sutton	4,900	5,100	5,000
U.S. Route 19 – North of WV 15	4,800	5,300	4,650
U.S. Route 19 – South of Flatwoods	3,500	4,000	4,300

Source: WV Department of Transportation, Division of Highways; Terrell Ellis & Associates, Inc.

In addition to highways, the County is also served by additional ground transportation services such as freight rail and interstate bus service. Braxton County has its own general aviation airport in Sutton. The Braxton County Airport is a publicly owned and operated airfield with a 4000 foot asphalt runway which is lighted and open to the general public. 100 low-lead fuel and jet fuel are available on site. The Braxton County Airport Authority is also starting construction soon on taxi lanes for future development of T-Hangars, Corporate Hangars, and Box Hangars. The nearest commercial aviation services to the County is the Harrison-Marion regional Airport located 59 miles away in Bridgeport, WV. The nearest international airport is the Pittsburgh International Airport which is 169 miles from the County.

Summary

- Average Daily Traffic on U.S. Route 19 into Sutton has declined in recent years but this trend is consistent with the rest of the state.
- Sutton is the home of the Braxton County Airport which is currently undergoing improvements.
- Braxton County’s central location, proximity to major interstate corridors, and existing transportation services make it well suited for both inter and intra-state commerce.

F. Conclusions

Demographics

The town of Sutton has experienced moderate population growth over the last decade. Braxton County is experiencing population growth at rates much higher than statewide averages. The county is one of the top ten counties in the state in population growth over the 1990-2000 period. The population growth is projected to continue through 2020 at rates higher than the overall state, however, these rates will not be as high as those experienced between 1990 and 2000. Beginning in 2010 the growth rate will remain constant but begin to decline. The age distribution of the current population in the town indicates that the majority of the population is aging in place. Issues related to senior citizens and social services for the elderly may become even more prevalent as the current population moves towards retirement age. Racial minorities do not make up a significant portion of the population at the town or county level.

Income Distribution

The number of households in the town is growing while the average household size is decreasing. This trend is consistent with state and national averages. HHI and PCPI levels are steadily increasing at the County and state levels, and the HHI of Sutton exceed the rest of the County. Poverty continues to be a problem for a significant portion of the population in the town and percentages have increased from 1989. Household incomes have increased significantly during the past ten years, indicating that perhaps local individuals have more money to spend and/or invest in their local community. However, as research indicates, there are still many families with marginal incomes, which reinforce the need for high-paying jobs that provide benefits for employees.

Economy

The County's major economic increases are in arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services sectors. Such tourism-related jobs are important to the local economy; however are not typically high-wage earning positions. Significant growth (99.3%) was recognized in the professional scientific, management, administrative and waste management services category. Sizable growth was also recognized in the areas of construction (36.2%) and manufacturing (21.4%). These sectors generally provide much higher wages than tourism-related industries. Retail sales have increased in the county and remain competitive with neighboring counties. Unemployment and unemployment rates have been declining since 1999 and the County has a strong labor force of skilled and educated workers.

Housing

Braxton County is experiencing growth in housing at a rate faster than statewide averages but this is not occurring in Sutton. The majority of the housing stock in the town is greater than 50 years old and there have not been many new houses built within the last decade. Homeownership rates in the town are lower than county and state averages. Rental vacancy rates are declining within the town but homeowner vacancy rates are rising and both rates are higher than the rest of the county.

Transportation

Average Daily Traffic on U.S. Route 19 into Sutton has declined in recent years but this trend is consistent with the rest of the state. Sutton is the home of the Braxton County Airport which is currently undergoing improvements. Braxton County’s central location, proximity to major interstate corridors, and existing transportation services make it well suited for both inter and intra-state commerce.

III. Public Involvement

A. Survey

The purpose of the survey was to identify the issues of greatest concern to the general public as well as to gauge public interest in the pursuit of specific types of development projects. The survey was distributed through a direct mailing; at various businesses throughout the downtown; at the local polling station during the town election; and on-line at the Braxton county Economic Development Authority’s website (www.braxtoncountywv.org). The group received 88 completed surveys. See Appendix A for a copy of the survey form and more detailed findings. The key findings include:

**Exhibit 16
Public Survey Findings Summary**

Top 5 Strengths	Top 5 Weaknesses	Top 5 Redevelopment Niches
1) Landmark Studio/Film Festival	1) General appearance of downtown	1) Restaurants
2) River	2) Lack of businesses	2) Artists and Crafters
3) Café Cimino	3) Burned out buildings	3) Recreation
4) Courthouse	4) Condition of buildings	4) Tourism
5) Historic District buildings	5) Lack of recreational activities	5) Retirees

Source: Terrell Ellis & Associates, Inc.

B. Public Meeting

A meeting was held to update the public on the plan process and to share initial findings from the trends analysis and public survey. The meeting was held on June 25, 2007 at 7:00 at the Sutton Town Hall and was attended by 15 people. Attendees of the meeting were provided an opportunity to comment on the data presented and also participated in a visioning exercise. In the exercise the attendees broke out into groups and came up with headlines for the local newspaper in the year 2017. For this exercise the participants were asked to envision what they would like to see Sutton become in ten years. The results of this exercise helped to formulate the vision statements for the plan. Concepts identified during this exercise were related to tourism, seniors and retirees, and recreation. See Appendix B for a copy of the sign-in sheet and conceptual notes from the visioning exercise.

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Participants at the public meeting were also asked to vote on their top issue for the strategic plan to address. The list of issues was compiled from the recommendations listed in the 2005 Master Plan as well as comments that were made in the public opinion survey responses. Two additional issues were offered by the participants at the meeting and were added to the list: community involvement and infrastructure. The participants were asked to place one or all of their three dots on the issues based on the prioritization they should have in the plan.

Exhibit 17 Issue Rankings Results

Issue	Number of Dots Received
Community Involvement (i.e., mechanisms to unite and engage the community)	10
Infrastructure (i.e., storm sewer, high speed internet)	9
Redevelopment of vacant/abandoned lots and buildings in the downtown	8
River Access Improvements	7
Building Improvements (i.e., physical improvements to facades, cleaning windows, etc.)	3
Gateway Improvements	1
Business Recruitment	1
Entertainments/Events/Community Activities	1
Personal Property Maintenance	0
Parking	0
Recreational Facilities/Activities	0
Improve Pedestrian Connectivity	0

Source: Terrell Ellis & Associates, Inc.

C. Vision Statement

Using the information that was collected through the steering committee, surveys, and public meeting a vision statement was created which describes what the participants would like to see for the future of Sutton over the next ten years.

Vision: To capitalize on the existing tourism draws in Sutton related to arts, cuisine, and recreation by enhancing existing services; targeting new attractants, event, or services which are complementary; and developing events and opportunities to showcase tourist attractants.

III. Goals, Objectives, and Strategies

Goal 1. Improve community involvement in civic activities.

This goal came out of comments that were made at the public meeting regarding public participation in local planning efforts. Attendees were concerned about effectively engaging the public in future projects and were looking for non-threatening ways to start introducing concepts of improvements and changes that could enhance Sutton.

Objective 1.1 Develop a community identity that citizens can embrace and create activities and events to celebrate that identity.

One example of this would be the annual May Day celebration in the historic district of Annapolis, Maryland. The local garden club sponsors a competition every year for businesses and residents in the district to decorate baskets with flowers, including the official town flower, the gerbera daisy. Garden club members then vote and select a winner who is awarded a prize. The residents enjoy participating in the tradition and the event acts as a tourism draw as people from all over the region come to see the displays. The event also helps to beautify the town by adding to the streetscape, which creates civic pride.

Objective 1.2 Provide a wide variety of methods for citizen input and participation.

As a result of this planning process, several valuable insights were gained about public participation in Sutton. We discovered that the surveys were well received, whereas evening meetings were not. The lesson learned from this experience is that multiple methods will need to be used in the future to disseminate information and to solicit public feedback. Meeting attendees suggested the use of additional surveys in the future or potentially other direct mailings that provide information and also an opportunity to provide written comments. The open format town hall-style meetings which have recently started also appear to be an effective tool for soliciting public

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involvement. Other suggestions that were made by the public meeting attendees included a newsletter or enticements such as raffles to encourage meeting attendance.

Objective 1.3 Involve the youth of the community in activities related to beautification and civic pride.

Coordinate with the local schools and youth-based organizations to develop volunteer programs that engage kids in local planning projects and downtown beautification. For example, students of art classes could display their pieces in a vacant storefront downtown, or the local girls scout troop could clean up and beautify an area as credit for a badge-earning activity. By increasing involvement of the local youth you are helping to instill civic pride at an early age while also tapping into a very useful volunteer base. Interaction with the youth in the form of a student representative to the Economic Development Commission or the Town Council would also be a valuable way to engage the younger generations and to identify their specific concerns about Sutton.

Goal 2. Build capacity and improve organizational structure to address planning and economic development issues.

In order to successfully implement and plan it is essential to have effective decisionmakers leading the charge. The Town of Sutton has an opportunity as a result of this planning effort to assess its current organizational structure and to determine if changes need to be made in order to better support economic development and planning. The creation of a dedicated group to address these issues is one important step. Additionally, efforts must be made to provide training to existing local officials so that they have the necessary information and resources to base important decisions on. This training should also be expanded to key members of the local community in order to increase awareness and build local capacity so that the same core group of citizens is not solely responsibly for implementing change.

Objective 2.1 Formalize the Economic Development Commission through the creation of a 501(c)(3) entity.

Once the IRS paperwork has been completed and filed, the newly formed 501(c)(3) organization should be prepared to become an active force in the community. It should have a board that is committed to holding regulator meetings and to working on implementing the recommendations of this strategic plan. The committee should work to develop collaborative partnerships with the Town, County Commission, Braxton County Development Authority (BCDA), and Region VII Planning and Development Council to further economic development in Sutton. The committee will also need to immediately begin to pursue project funding through appropriate grants and other partnership opportunities.

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Objective 2.2 Provide training opportunities to local elected officials, committee members, and interested members of the general public on planning and economic development.

Two of the goals of the BCDA strategic plan are to improve communication and coordination with the municipalities in the county as well as to increase education and awareness about economic development opportunities. The Committee should look to partner with the BCDA in developing education and awareness programs as well as potential training programs for board members and local elected officials. The Committee could also be responsible for sponsoring training seminars or workshops and lecture series on planning or economic development topics of interest to the community, such as historic preservation, adaptive reuse, recreational planning, branding, tourism marketing, etc.

Objective 2.3 Encourage the Town of Sutton to become a Certified Local Government (CLG) as recognized by the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO).

The CLG program assists in encouraging historic preservation by making it a part of local government. CLGs are the only eligible applicant for a specified pool of grant funding which is made up of ten percent of the federal allocations to the state for historic preservation, and it is a major incentive of the CLG Program. A local government can participate directly in this program when it is certified by the SHPO as having a historic preservation / landmarks commission, and meets standards set forth in West Virginia Code 8-26A and by the National Historic Preservation Amendments Act of 1980. This federal law defines a CLG as any city, town, county or parish that meets five basic criteria. Participation in this program would provide Sutton with increased funding opportunities for improvements to buildings in the downtown historic district.

Goal 3. Assess the current infrastructure system and identify necessary improvements.

Public comments obtained through this effort as well as the information provided in previous planning studies has led to the identification of several deficiencies in the current physical infrastructure. The storm water management issue in the North Hill area along Main Street and the condition of the brick road on Riverview Drive near the courthouse area are examples of infrastructure issues that have been raised. Some of these deficiencies must be resolved before any successful redevelopment can occur, whereas other efforts could be considered more long-range or lower-priority.

Objective 3.1 Assess the storm sewer and drainage issues in the downtown along Main Street.

The Committee should work with the town and the PDC to assess the storm water runoff and drainage problems that have been identified for the area of Main Street near North Hill Road. Until these issues are fully understood there can be little or no

redevelopment to this area of the downtown because of flooding and mold problems in the existing structures.

Objective 3.2 Identify required capital improvements related to infrastructure, including roads, and work with the Town to develop a capital improvements plan.

The Committee should work to identify capital improvements to roadways, sidewalks, and other infrastructure systems that are critical to the successful redevelopment of the downtown. Parking may be a particular constraint that will need to be addressed as new buildings come on-line in the downtown district. Infrastructure projects should be phased according to the prioritized redevelopment areas as defined by this plan (see Goal 4) and presented to the Town as a starting point for the development of a Capital Improvements Plan (CIP). The CIP is a detailed plan for major investment expenditures for construction, maintenance, improvements, and replacement of the community's physical system. Ideally, the projects identified in the CIP should be prioritized based on a set of evaluation criteria and should also include phasing and budget/funding information. See Appendix C for recommendations related to parking that were made in the 2003 Master Plan.

Goal 4. Rehabilitate and redevelop available vacant buildings in downtown.

The primary focus of the Committee should be the redevelopment of the downtown area and any other improvements to the Town that may be necessary to attract investment in that area. The Committee should initially focus on some key areas that have the best immediate potential for rehabilitation and/or occupation/redevelopment around the courthouse square. These properties include: the Ben Franklin Building, the old Café Cimino location, the old telephone building, the BOE garage, and the Braxton Motor storage facilities along Riverview Drive, and the storefronts on Main Street that face the courthouse. Also included in this top tier of priority redevelopment sites are the two buildings along Main Street that suffered fire damages.

Objective 4.1 Identify and inventory available storefronts in the downtown area that are suitable for redevelopment

Using the information provided in the Historic District Master Plan and any other available data compile information available on the top tier redevelopment sites such as square footage, needed improvements, estimated rehabilitation costs, owner information and any available floor plans. Once this effort is completed for top tier sites continue to collect the same data for all remaining vacant sites. See Appendix D for a current map of



downtown properties, their current uses, and potential future redevelopment locations.

Objective 4.2 Clean up vacant storefronts and make them more visually appealing.

Enlist the help of community volunteers and civic groups to come up with creative ways to make visual improvements to the vacant storefronts. For example, a program could be started so that local businesses or groups could “adopt” a vacant storefront and be responsible for keeping in clean and/or using it as a display area. Efforts have already been made in this area and the impact from the few storefronts has been great, subsequently this should continue and be supported by the Committee.

Objective 4.3 Coordinate with the Braxton County Development Authority to market available buildings in the downtown.

Taking the data that is compiled in Objective 4.1 the Committee should work with the BCDA to include available data and photos in the county database of available sites so that the locations can be included in any marketing efforts or responses to requests for site information. Marketing efforts should be targeted towards business that support the overall vision of developing the downtown with arts and crafts and culinary related services which would complement existing attractants. See Appendix E for a detailed discussion of business recruitment strategies.

Objective 4.4 Secure funding to define structural viability of buildings and develop potential re-use options for these structures.



An analysis needs to be conducted through the use of an architect and engineering contractor that would evaluate the structural strengths and limitations of the buildings. Once that is determined potential redevelopment concepts can be explored and proposed. Redevelopment concepts to consider should support identified niche markets for Sutton such as a working/living/gallery space for artisans, assisted living or related senior services, or professional office space for courthouse related functions. The redevelopment of

these buildings should be viewed as a key component in the overall redevelopment of the downtown.

Goal 5. Enhance and increase recreational opportunities in Sutton

The Historic District Master Plan from 2003 made many suggestions about improvements to the recreational system in Sutton which remain valid and should be addressed. Public comments received through this planning effort reiterated a community desire to improve existing recreational facilities such as the pool and to expand potential recreational opportunities related to the use of the Elk River and the Sutton Lake. Concepts from the Master Plan that should be encouraged and further explored include: a riverfront trail from the gateway to downtown attractants, a basketball court and playground near pool area, decks overlooking the river a strategic points in downtown, and additional river access points.

Objective 5.1 Improve and preserve the swimming pool.

It is clear from public comments that the pool is an important asset to the community and the County as it is the only pool in the area. The Committee should work to preserve and improve the operation of the pool through partnerships with the county and other potentially interested parties.

Objective 5.2 Develop additional access points to the river

The Historic District Master Plan identified thirteen locations along the Elk River that would be suitable for additional access points for various uses (i.e., boats, fishing, etc.). See the map in Appendix C of the Master Plan document for these locations. Some of the sites are on public land (federal or municipal), whereas others would require purchase or easements. A majority already provide some access to the river. Priority should be given to sites that would provide connectivity to other existing or planned future recreational facilities as well as downtown attractants.

Objective 5.3 Explore the creation of a river trail for bicycles and pedestrians

Several trail concepts were presented in the Master Plan and it is apparent through our planning efforts that there is interest in creating a recreational trail along the river that would be suitable for both pedestrians and bicycles. Further exploration of this concept to define the best potential route would be needed and consideration should be given to providing linkages to downtown attractants and recreational facilities when defining the route.

Goal 6. Establish and promote Sutton as a destination for tourism and retirees.

The future vision for the Town Sutton seems to be based around concepts of arts and crafts that play upon existing artisans in residence as well as the film festival and other activities at the Landmark Studio. Café Cimino and its new Bed and Breakfast facility is also a definite draw for tourists of the “foodie” persuasion who consider cooking as its own art form. Therefore, increasing the number of businesses that are based on these niches would help to support the overall branding of Sutton as an Arts and Crafts location.



Objective 6.1 Engage resident artists and chefs as well as other nearby local artists and chefs in efforts to brand Sutton as an Arts and Crafts tourism destination.

There are already several renowned artists that reside or have connections to Sutton as well as others that were within close proximity to the town. The Committee must begin to build relationships with these individuals and to coordinate with them on potential projects as their buy-in and participation would be critical to the successful branding of the Town. One resource to partner with would be the Central Appalachian Arts and Crafts Cooperative (CAACC), an existing organization of local artisans. The membership of the CAAC could be utilized for the following activities:

- Focus groups to explore artist relocation programs and identify incentives needed to recruit new artists to Sutton
- The development of a gallery space in Sutton similar to the previous Poplar Forest concept at Flatwoods.
- The development of art-related workshops targeted towards tourists.
- Development of an arts and crafts festival or arts and crafts elements to coincide with existing festivals/events.

Objective 6.2 Create partnerships among local businesses, events, and residents to cross promote complementary products and services.

Partnership concepts could include the creation of downtown galleries and/or artist workshops that could be open to the public. Another concept would be the establishment of arts and craft related training workshops and seminars that could be led by local artists. Cooking related workshops and festivals as well as gourmet food stores would also be logical expansion areas. Workshops and training seminars could be held in conjunction with the Film Festival at least initially with the potential for developing separate events in the future.

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Another vision that takes into consideration the existing senior population as well as the increasing needs of future seniors and nationwide trends for seniors is the branding of Sutton as a retirement destination.

Objective 6.3 Explore designating Sutton and/or Braxton County as an official retirement community in West Virginia.

West Virginia has a designated retirement community program that is administered through Retire WV. Currently there are only 5 counties or municipalities that have qualified for this designation. Designated Retirement Communities, or DRCs, are communities that have undergone a rigorous 12-point application process that ensures that the community does indeed provide the resources and amenities required to be considered as a viable retirement destination. This designation can be a useful marketing tool for branding as a retirement destination and should be further explored by the Committee in partnership with the Town and the BCDA.

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IV. Implementation Plan

Objective 1.1 Develop a community identity that citizens can embrace and create activities and events to celebrate that identity.

Strategies	Priority	Timeframe	Responsible Parties	Potential Funding Source
Form a subcommittee to focus on creating identity concepts for public review/approval	High	Fall 2007	Economic Development Committee (EDC), EDC Subcommittee, Town	Not applicable
Once concept is selected begin to identify specific events both small and large scale to publicize and celebrate it which engage citizens	Medium	Winter 2008	EDC, Town	Seek community sponsors

Objective 1.2 Provide a wide variety of methods for citizen input and participation.

Strategies	Priority	Timeframe	Responsible Parties	Potential Funding Source
Develop a quarterly newsletter for updating the citizens on community issues related to downtown redevelopment.	Medium	Winter 2008	EDC	Seek advertising or sponsors
Write letters to the editor for local newspapers on issues that you are looking to gain public support for	Medium	Ongoing	EDC	Not applicable
Develop a website for the organization which displays plans and projects and keeps up to date information on outcomes being achieved and provided a citizen feedback component	Low	Summer 2008	EDC	Seek sponsors (consider page on BCDA website)
Continue with town hall style meetings and use those forums to raise issues and educate public about planning and economic development concerns	High	Ongoing	EDC, Town	Not applicable
Develop a flyer or brochure that summarizes some of the key priority projects from this planning effort	High	Winter 2008	EDC	BCDA Marketing Fund

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Objective 1.3 Involve the youth of the community in activities related to beautification and civic pride.

Strategies	Priority	Timeframe	Responsible Parties	Potential Funding Source
Work with the Town and other appropriate parties to identify buildings to include in program and to coordinate access to the properties	High	Fall 2007	EDC, Town	Not applicable
Develop a list of participants based on contacts made from the school district and local churches and civic organizations with programs geared towards youth.	Medium	Winter 2008	EDC, Town	Not applicable
Identify student representative to participate in EDC committee or Town Council	Medium	Fall 2007	EDC, Town	Not applicable

Objective 2.1 Formalize the Economic Development Commission through the creation of a 501(c)(3) entity.

Strategies	Priority	Timeframe	Responsible Parties	Potential Funding Source
Complete filing of IRS paperwork, establish board, and set regular meeting schedule.	High	Fall 2007	EDC	Flex-E-Grant

Objective 2.2 Provide training opportunities to local elected officials, committee members, and interested members of the general public on planning and economic development.

Strategies	Priority	Timeframe	Responsible Parties	Potential Funding Source
Partner with the BDCA and PDC to identify possible training and workshop opportunities	Medium	Spring 2007	EDC, BCDA, PDC	BCDA

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Objective 2.3 Encourage the Town of Sutton to become a Certified Local Government (CLG) as recognized by the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO).

Strategies	Priority	Timeframe	Responsible Parties	Potential Funding Source
Obtain necessary paperwork from SHPO and determine what needs to be done in order to qualify for program.	Medium	Spring 2008	EDC, Town	Not applicable

Objective 3.1 Assess the storm sewer and drainage issues in the downtown along Main Street.

Strategies	Priority	Timeframe	Responsible Parties	Potential Funding Source
Obtain necessary resources (i.e., financial and technical) to begin assessment of storm sewer.	High	Fall 2007	EDC, Town, PDC	Community participation grants

Objective 3.2 Identify required capital improvements related to infrastructure, including roads, and work with the Town to develop a capital improvements plan.

Strategies	Priority	Timeframe	Responsible Parties	Potential Funding Source
Develop list of known infrastructure improvement projects needed to support redevelopment in downtown..	Medium	Spring 2008	EDC, Town	Not applicable
Encourage Town to use list as a basis for beginning a CIP.	Medium	Spring 2008	EDC, Town	Not applicable

Objective 4.1 Identify and inventory available storefronts in the downtown area that are suitable for redevelopment

Strategies	Priority	Timeframe	Responsible Parties	Potential Funding Source
Begin data collection activities for top-tier properties.	High	Winter 2008	EDC	Not applicable

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Objective 4.2 Clean up vacant storefronts and make them more visually appealing.

Strategies	Priority	Timeframe	Responsible Parties	Potential Funding Source
Develop an adopt a storefront program. Work with the Town and other appropriate parties to identify buildings to include in program and to coordinate access to the properties.	High	Fall 2007	EDC, Town	Seek community sponsors
Identify program participants (local business, churches, youth and civic groups)	High	Fall 2007	EDC, Town, Volunteers	Not applicable

Objective 4.3 Coordinate with the Braxton County Development Authority to market available buildings in the downtown.

Strategies	Priority	Timeframe	Responsible Parties	Potential Funding Source
Contribute data regarding available sites to BCDA for use in county-wide site inventory database.	Low	Summer 2008	EDC, BDCA	Not applicable

Objective 4.4 Secure funding to define structural viability of buildings and develop potential re-use options for these structures.

Strategies	Priority	Timeframe	Responsible Parties	Potential Funding Source
Obtain necessary resources (i.e., financial and technical) to begin assessment of buildings and re-use concepts.	High	Fall 2007	EDC, Town, BCDA, PDC	USDA Rural Development, RBEG

Objective 5.1 Improve and preserve the swimming pool.

Strategies	Priority	Timeframe	Responsible Parties	Potential Funding Source
Identify what resources are needed for operation and on-time opening in of the pool in 2008 and work to secure those resources through the appropriate partnerships.	Medium	Winter 2008	EDC, Town, BCDA, BCC	WV land and Water Conservation Fund

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Objective 5.2 Develop additional access points to the river

Strategies	Priority	Timeframe	Responsible Parties	Potential Funding Source
Identify most viable new access points based on those identified in the Master Plan and work to secure access.	Low	Summer 2008	EDC, Town	Seek assistance from WV Dept. of Natural Resources

Objective 5.3 Explore the creation of a river trail for bicycles and pedestrians

Strategies	Priority	Timeframe	Responsible Parties	Potential Funding Source
Identify most viable trail alignment based on concepts identified in the Master Plan.	Low	Summer 2008	EDC, Town	TEA-21
Work to secure resources for further study and design concepts.	Low	Summer 2008	EDC, Town	TEA-21

Objective 6.1 Engage resident artists and chefs other nearby local artists and chefs in efforts to brand Sutton as an Arts and Crafts tourism destination.

Strategies	Priority	Timeframe	Responsible Parties	Potential Funding Source
Coordinate with CAACC to develop network of local artists and crafters.	High	Fall 2007	EDC, CAACC	Flex-E-Grant
Send a letter and possible survey questionnaire to resident artists, craftspeople, chefs, etc and those located nearby to explain concepts and gauge interest	High	Fall 2007	EDC, Town, BCDA	Not applicable

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Objective 6.2 Create partnerships among local businesses, events, and residents to cross promote complementary products and services.

Strategies	Priority	Timeframe	Responsible Parties	Potential Funding Source
Explore the creation of additional events/service/businesses based on the interest expressed by artists/chefs, etc. in participating.	High	Winter 2008	EDC, Town, BCDA	

Objective 6.3 Explore designating Sutton and/or Braxton County as an official retirement community(DRC) in West Virginia.

Strategies	Priority	Timeframe	Responsible Parties	Potential Funding Source
Work with the Town to understand the criteria to qualify as a DRC and identify steps needed to be taken to pursue designation.	Medium	Spring 2008	EDC, Town, BCDA	

Appendix A

Sample Survey Form and Detailed Results

Town of Sutton Public Opinion Survey

The following are elements of the Town of Sutton that are considered strengths by the community: *Rank top 5 in order of importance (1 = highest and 5 = lowest)*

Element	Rank
Historic District Buildings	
Location of town	
River	
Courthouse	
Landmark Studio/Film Festival	
Cafe Cimino	
Fishing Pier at lake	
Pool	
Other:	

The following are elements of the Town of Sutton that are considered weaknesses by the community: *Rank top 5 in order of importance (1 = highest and 5 = lowest)*

Element	Rank
Condition of buildings	
Burned out buildings/vacant lots	
Parking	
General appearance of downtown area	
Lack of businesses to draw customers	
Condition of infrastructure (storm drainage, sidewalks, etc.)	
Lack of river access	
Lack of recreational activities	
Other:	

What services do you stay inside the community for? *(check all that are appropriate)*

Restaurants Retail Convenience Retail Professional Services Entertainment Personal Services

What services do you travel outside the community for? *(circle all that are appropriate)*

Restaurants Retail Convenience Retail Professional Services Entertainment Personal Services

Where do you go for these services? _____

Which niche development should be the focus of the downtown revitalization efforts?

Rank top 5 in order of priority (1 = highest and 5 = lowest)

Niche	Rank
Tourism	
Artists and Crafters	
Recreation	
Retirees	
Antiques	
Restaurants	
County Seat Functions	
Other:	

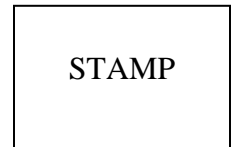
If you would be interested in volunteering to support economic development and downtown revitalization efforts in Sutton please provide you contact information below:

Name: _____ **Phone:** _____

Thank you for your participation in this survey.

Additional Comments:

Town of Sutton
PO Box 366
Sutton, WV 26601



**Town of Sutton
PO Box 366
Sutton, WV 26601**

Community Survey

The following are elements of the Town of Sutton that are considered strengths by the community
Rank top 5 in order of importance (1=highest and 5=lowest)

Historic District Buildings	160
Location of town	142
River	189
Courthouse	179
Landmark Studio/Film Festival	197
Café cimino	175
Fishing pier at lake	145
Pool	140
Other	27

Other:

home to 6 big radio stations
century Inn
Library
flea market
outlet mall
ballfields on south side
church community theater
bank
John's Barber Shop
Braxton Motor

The following are elements of the Town of Sutton that are considered weaknesses by the community
Rank top 5 in order of importance (1=highest and 5=lowest)

Condition of buildings	200
Burned out buildings/vacant lots	219
Parking	145
General appearance of downtown area	238
Lack of businesses to draw customers	223
Condition of infrastructure (storm drainage, s	174
Lack of river access	159
Lack of recreational activities	182
Other	9

Other:

basketball court in street
trashy propoerties
tie yard smell
brushy street
law enforcement
city supervision
draft house
Stonewall St./Industrial Ave
pool season shortened
lack of things for children and families to do
Junkyard at 2nd and riverview

What services do you stay inside the community for? (check all appropriate)

Restaurants	37
Retail	19
Convenience Retail	29
Professional Services	28
Entertainment	24
Personal Services	20

What services do you travel outside the community for? (check all appropriate)

Restaurants	61
Retail	62
Convenience Retail	38
Professional Services	50
Entertainment	54
Personal Services	42

Where do you go for these services?

Summersville	Charleston	Weston	Gassaway	Bridgeport
Clarksburg	Flatwoods	Buckhannon	Morgantown	Fairmont

Which niche development should be the focus of the downtown revitalization efforts?

Rank top 5 in order of importance (1=highest and 5=lowest)

Tourism	184	Other:
Artists and Crafters	196	entertainment
Recreation	195	festval
Retirees	175	golf course
Antiques	171	theater arts, art films, dance, music
Restaurants	193	spa
County Seat Functions	148	community activities
Other	22	general cleanup
		jobs

Additional Comments:

more recreation for kids	personal property maintenance	Rafting/canoeing
finish library	beautification	decorate windows in abandoned storefronts
smell from tie yard	town market/farmers market in center	improvements to road conditions in downtown
affordable shops in downtown	improve river views/access	loitering
buildings need repair	Festival	new/maintained landscaping around courthouse
Sutton has nothing to offer	recreation of lake/golf course	clean streets
need a change in leadership	Spa	put meters back on Main st
		entertainment for young people

Appendix B

Public Meeting Sign-In Sheet and Visions Exercise Concepts

Town of Sutton
Economic Development Strategic Plan
Public Meeting Sign-In Sheet
June 25, 2007

NAME	ADDRESS	PHONE	E-MAIL	WILLING TO VOLUNTEER?
Jeff & Lena Wright	102 Pinehurst	765-7025	<u>jeffwright@yahoo.com</u>	
Daniel Forett	180 Main St.	765-3676	<u>danny@theboss97fm.com</u>	Yes
Al Sergi	180 Main St.	765-7373	<u>AL@theboss97fm.com</u>	
Sandi Stadmore	N. Lauren St.	765-5090	<u>sanskid@yahoo.com</u>	
Troy Bowgren	619 Main St.	765-7566	<u>ghbnwv@hotmail.com</u>	
Mike Gioulis	612 Main St.	765-5463		
Agatha Tinny	402 Main St.	765-7467		
Kathy Walker	603 Main St.	765-3462	<u>kewalker@hotmail.com</u>	Yes
Jim Walker	615 Main St.	765-7566	<u>jdonnwalker@hotmail.com</u>	Yes
Kathy Coga	100 Main St.	765-4019	<u>kwinters@citynet.net</u>	
Georgetta Knight	115 N. Hillcrest Dr.	765-7036	<u>geokni@verizon.et</u>	Yes
Craig Smith	201 2nd St. Sutton	765-5555		
Pam Cory	125 N. Hillcrest Dr.	765-7550	<u>Houseplay_123@yahoo.com</u>	

**Concepts from Visioning Exercise
Town of Sutton
June 25, 2007**

Group 1:

Top rated town for retirees in WV
Tourism – music, dancing, water activities
Film – made and shown in Sutton
New cafes and ice cream parlor
Services tailored to retirees, facilities that are pedestrian friendly
Disposable income
Lower property tax, cost of living
Accessibility

Group 2:

Compost facility eliminates need for landfills
Riverwalk from Sutton to Gassaway completed
Year-round pool (indoor/outdoor)
Restoration of cobblestone streets
Cleanup dump area/transfer facility along river
Brownfields issue

Group 3:

Senior complex w/ assisted living
Rehabbed historic structures combined with new construction
Extension of recreational trail for river access
Annual fishing tournament
Landmark studio arts/film festival (large scale)

Group 4:

Bridge by-pass (re-route trucks from timbering)
Riverwalk fishing tournament
New business in downtown
Timber business relocates
Recreation
Plaza redevelopment – pedestrian friendly

Appendix C

Parking Recommendations from the 2003 Master Plan

Parking Recommendations from the 2003 Master Plan:

- Eliminate parking on Third Street next to the jail so when viewing onto the courthouse square, parking is not seen from the front or public side of the courthouse.
- Parking in the rear of the courthouse can be expanded with the purchase of the lot across Riverview Drive and an off-street parking lot be developed for both the courthouse and future possible development along the riverfront from Fourth Street to the US19 bridge.
- Parking around the courthouse should be limited to a two-hour minimum managed with enforcement of the time limit through meters or personnel.
- More long-term parking should be directed to town's municipal lot through adequate signage. Upgrade of the sidewalk and lighting on Riverview Drive from the municipal lot to the courthouse will be necessary to improve pedestrian usage and safety.
- Diagonal parking on Fourth Street is not recommended because the street doesn't meet the minimum width requirements (35-feet) for this consideration.
- The existing 60 degree parking on Riverview could stay; however, parallel parking on both sides of the street would be a better solution.

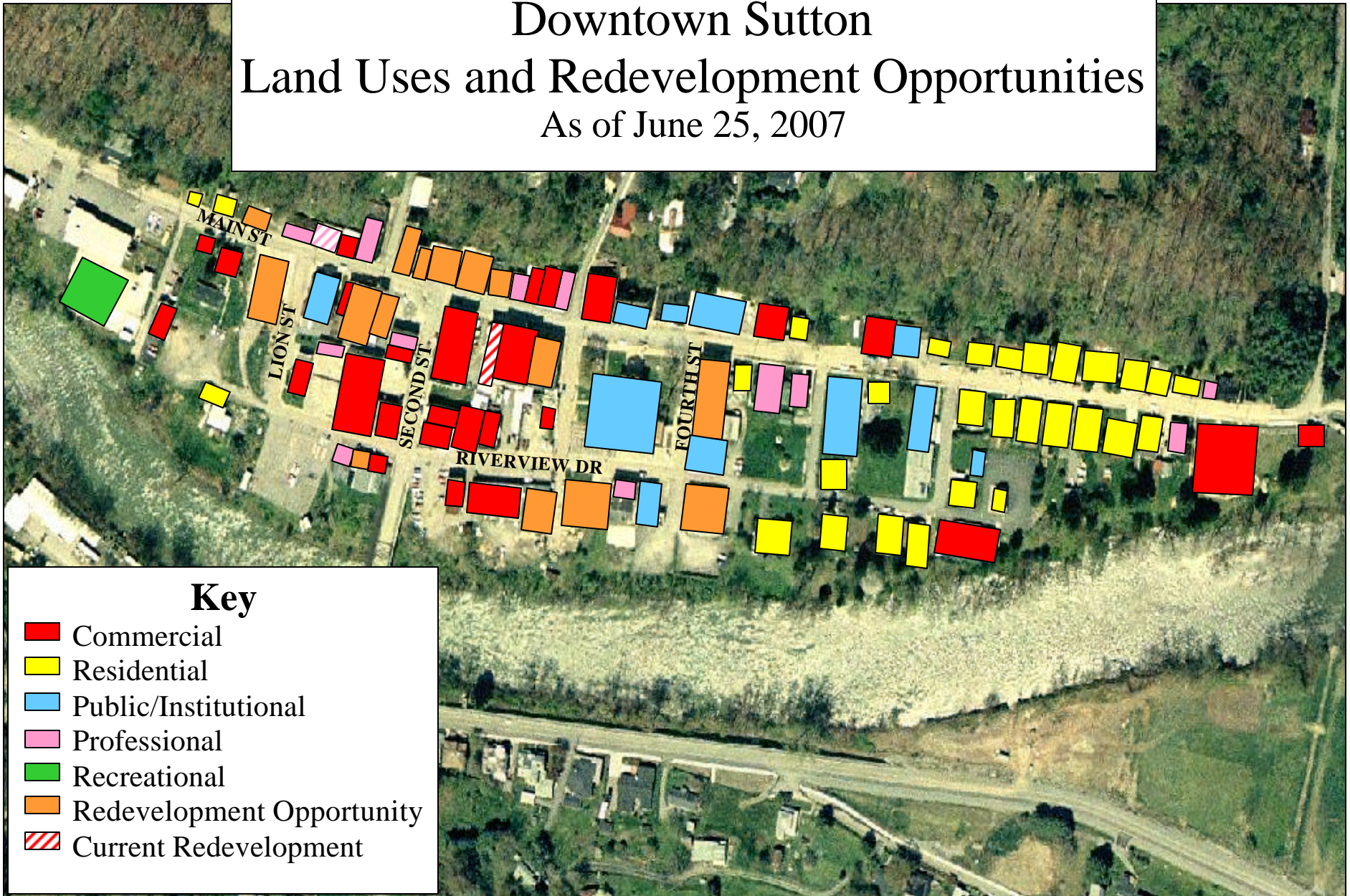
Appendix D

Current Downtown Land Uses and Potential Redevelopment Site Map

Downtown Sutton

Land Uses and Redevelopment Opportunities

As of June 25, 2007



Appendix E

Business Recruitment Strategies

Recruitment Strategy

1. Tools

Market Position Statement

A market position statement provides the reader with an image of the community. It should succinctly capture the community's strengths and focus attention on the key attributes that the community is trying to sell. The following is a sample position statement that Sutton could use in its promotional literature.

Sutton's affordable and convenient location makes it a perfect community to live, work and play. Nestled on the banks of the scenic Elk River, Sutton has safe neighborhoods for families of all sizes, an active arts community, and a historic downtown with opportunities for new commercial enterprises.

Type of Materials

The materials to support recruitment should be flexible in nature so that a package can be customized based upon the information needs of the prospect. The following recommendations support the development of user-friendly marketing materials:

- Overall Design: Keep the design simple, yet high quality. The purpose of the materials is to attract interest and encourage prospects to take a closer look at Sutton, not to answer every question. In order to develop cost effective materials, the following suggestions should be considered:
 - ✓ Use folders to hold the content of the packet; place a sticker with Sutton's logo on the front
 - ✓ Print content of the packet on sheets with simple desktop publishing software. Select software that can accommodate photographs and the logo design in order to make the sheets more visually attractive.
- Package Content: Sheets containing the following information will provide easy to read and useful information:
 - ✓ Market Position Statement: define what the vision for downtown Ronceverte is with regard to targeted markets
 - ✓ Map of Trade Area: trade area map may include primary trade area boundary, highways, distances to major attractions and institutions; brief narrative description

- ✓ Map of Downtown Business District: this map may include building footprints; locations of parking, major building, traffic generators, downtown anchors; traffic patterns
- ✓ General Demographic and Economic Overview of Area: information should focus on the key strengths of the community such as population growth, income trends, trends in retail sales; tourism visitation and expenditures
- ✓ Description of Downtown's Strengths: focus on strong business mix, historic ambiance, Main Street activities; proximity to River
- ✓ Downtown Business Mix: describe how many businesses, the breakdown by type, i.e. retail, service, office, institutions, etc. and clusters of strength
- ✓ Potential Business Opportunities: note opportunities related to professional services, services for the elderly, services and products for the arts/crafts, destination entertainment, recreation
- ✓ Available Sites: develop a sheet for each available property including a photograph, location, current use, lease/sale terms, size, contact information and any other pertinent details
- ✓ Quotes and Testimonials: solicit positive comments from existing business owners about the benefits of doing business in downtown Sutton
- ✓ Contact Information: point of contact for any inquiries regarding downtown space

2. Approach

There are a variety of strategies that can be employed when prospecting for potential downtown tenants. The following recommendations include a variety and provide an array of options for business recruitment. Some are low cost, yet effective, while others may entail the expenditure of more resources.

Retail Recruitment Strategies

<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Methodology</i>	<i>Resources</i>
Solicit expansion by businesses within the district.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Personal visits with store owners explaining the opportunity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Staff time. ▪ Market information to support the case. ▪ Available space.
Target businesses within the 15 mile trade area for expansion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Determine types of businesses that are desirable. ▪ Visit similar stores within the area and develop a prospect list of those that are of high quality. ▪ Send marketing materials with cover letter requesting an appointment. ▪ Follow up with phone call within one week to arrange appointment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Printed marketing materials. ▪ Postage. ▪ Staff time. ▪ Travel funds. ▪ Available space.
Provide information to tourists on potential business opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Set up a booth at tourism functions. ▪ Provide recruitment materials ▪ Have a knowledgeable person man the table. ▪ Develop a process for follow up with leads. ▪ Tag all materials with a contact for business development opportunities in Sutton. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Printed materials. ▪ Staff time
Advertise in regional publications about business development opportunities in downtown Sutton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Target select communities, i.e. Charleston, Morgantown, etc. ▪ Create a quality printed advertising campaign that defines the opportunities and promotes Sutton's strengths. ▪ Respond to all leads with appropriate materials and site visit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Significant advertising revenues for design and placement. ▪ Printed materials. ▪ Travel funds. ▪ Staff time

<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Methodology</i>	<i>Resources</i>
Establish a web page for business recruitment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Include market analysis ▪ Downtown strengths ▪ Financial incentives ▪ Redevelopment opportunities ▪ Types of businesses that are being sought ▪ Testimonials ▪ E-mail inquiries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Web designer ▪ Staff time for follow up
Solicit business prospects through area alumni associations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Gather contact lists ▪ Develop communications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Printed materials ▪ Postage ▪ Staff time for follow up
Networking functions with realtors, bankers, accountants, developers, media reps, economic development government agencies, and SBDC, to educate them on recruitment efforts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Organize informational meeting(s) with key professionals. ▪ Prepare presentation on downtown's market niche, recruitment targets, provide materials and contact information. ▪ Follow up with individuals to secure their assistance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Funding to sponsor an event. ▪ Power Point presentation. ▪ Marketing materials.
Solicit interest from micro-entrepreneurs that have received loan funds from Mountain CAP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Personal visits with owners explaining the opportunity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Staff time. ▪ Market information to support the case. ▪ Available space.
Implement a public relations campaign to inform the public of recruitment program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Host a media event. ▪ Develop press packets with information on recruitment campaign. ▪ Post campaign on all pertinent web sites. ▪ Monthly updates to media. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Power Point presentation. ▪ Marketing materials.