

## Regional Resources Reports Western Maryland



*Regional Resources Teams, comprised of the 10 State Agencies of the [Governor's Commerce Subcabinet](#) as well as the Governor's Office of Intergovernmental Affairs, were formed in 2019 to improve communication and collaboration between state agencies representatives in their respective regions across the state. The teams meet regularly to provide project updates and identify opportunities to assist businesses and local jurisdictions with economic development efforts. This report exemplifies how the Regional Resources Team is collaborating to support Western Maryland.*

The Western Maryland Regional Resources Team is slightly smaller than most of the other regions. Still, it is a close-knit group that takes a profound professional and personal interest in the region's economic health. The Team includes Washington, Allegany, and Garrett Counties, whose combined total population of these three counties is equal to the county to the east, Frederick.

Verso Corporation announced the closure of the Luke Paper Mill in February of 2019 after 131 years of production, shuttering the doors a few short months later. Six hundred sixty-eight employees lost their jobs at a mill, which set a tone for the region economically.

Since the announcement of the closure, the Regional Team has worked hard to situate the displaced mill workers and to help find a viable purchaser of the facility. The Team has also helped coordinate and advertise job fairs. The Maryland Department of the Environment has engaged on the wastewater treatment facility issues at the property. The Maryland Department of Commerce has been assisting prospective purchasers of the mill in learning more about the opportunity to own this piece of history.

Monthly team calls always provide an update on the situation and discussion on the next layer of challenges for the project. Now that there are parties interested in the facility, it is this team that the project managers turn to for assistance. For example, the State Highway Administration's Regional Team member, learning that the Administration was interested in upgrading road signage around the site, coordinated a call with the Administration's planners and the Western MD Regional Resources Team to discuss the planned or potential future uses of the facility that would influence the regional signage.

These little bits of extra connective tissue help projects move in the right direction. The result is a more relevant and impactful team of regional representatives from the State of Maryland working collaboratively in Western Maryland.