



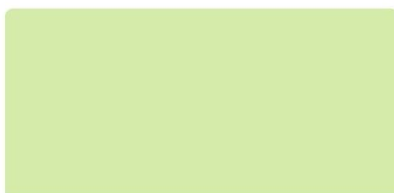
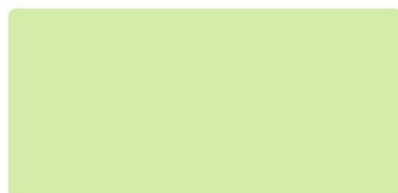
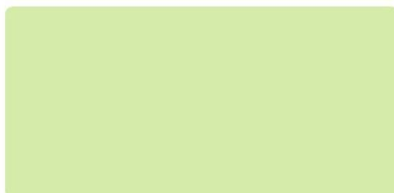
Technical Assistance Program



An Action Plan for
Strengthening the Local
Food Economy and
Downtown

Osceola, Arkansas

May 19, 2015



Community Story

Osceola is a city of about 7,700 people nestled on the west side of the Mississippi River in northeast Arkansas. While recent decades have brought economic and population decline, Osceola has many assets upon which it can build a stronger community, including its rich history of agriculture and music, several industrial employers, a historic downtown, and access to the Mississippi River.

Like many small towns and rural areas, the county has experienced episodes of economic growth and decline. The area's fertile soils made it Arkansas' leading cotton producer and a major producer of rice and soybeans. Agriculture was a mainstay of the local economy for several decades. But starting in the 1950s, the move towards mechanization in farming initiated a long period of population and economic decline.¹ The county's economy took another hit when the Eaker Air Force base closed in 1992.

In recent years the steel industry has emerged and is poised to play an important role in the region's economic development. Big River Steel broke ground in 2014 on a \$1.3 billion steel plant in Osceola. Upon completion, the plant will employ about 500 people with an average annual compensation of \$75,000.² Big River Steel joins Nucor-Yamato, Nucor Hickman, Tenaris Manufacturers to form a growing steel cluster. However, the county's unemployment and poverty rates still remain well above the state and national averages. Many of the people working in the industry live in Missouri or Tennessee and commute long distances to the plants.³ This is a missed opportunity to attract more people to live in Osceola and contribute t.



Figure 1 - Osceola's historical courthouse sits at the center of downtown.



Figure 2 – Mississippi County continues to be a major producer of commodities such as cotton

Health is another major concern in Osceola. Mississippi County's rates for diabetes, heart disease deaths, high blood pressure, and obesity all easily exceed rates for Arkansas as a whole. Local diets are an important factor. Survey data indicate that less than 20 percent of the county's residents eat five servings or more of fruit and vegetables each day.⁴

Osceola views a stronger local food economy as a key strategy for improving both the economy and improving health and quality of life for existing residents. A focus on local foods can also give the city's downtown revitalization efforts a boost, which could attract some

¹ Delta Bridge Project. *Strategic Community Plan, Mississippi County Arkansas (2013-2023)*. 2014.

² Big River Steel. About. <http://bigriversteel.com/about/>. Accessed January 20, 2015.

³ Delta Bridge Project. *Strategic Community Plan, Mississippi County Arkansas (2013-2023)*. 2014.

⁴ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Health Indicators Warehouse. <http://www.healthindicators.gov/>.

of the new steel workers to lay down roots in the city rather than commuting from distance places, such as Memphis. As such, it could also be a strategy for encouraging a smart growth pattern as the region continues to build up the steel cluster.

One challenge Osceola faces in building its local food economy is that the agricultural sector has traditionally revolved around commodity crops such as cotton. There simply have not been many farmers growing food for the region's population. Figure 1 shows that Mississippi County had nearly 350 farms in 2012, yet only eight were producing either vegetables or fruits. While the county generated more than \$300 million in agricultural sales in 2012, only \$51,000 came through direct to consumer channels such as farmers markets and roadside stands. This figure has significant room to grow considering that Osceola's residents spend about \$14 million on food each year.⁵

Figure 3 - Agricultural Statistics for Mississippi County, Arkansas

U.S. Agriculture Census Figure	2007	2012
Total Farms	369	347
Vegetable Farms	6	6
Fruit, Tree Nut, and Berry Farms	7	2
Livestock, Poultry, and their Products Farms	40	25
Total Agricultural Sales	\$196 million	\$315 million
Agricultural Sales Direct to Consumers	\$28,000	\$51,000

The good news is that Mississippi County and the surrounding counties have some of the most fertile soils in the world and plenty of land dedicated to agriculture. There is substantial room to grow the local food economy and use it to leverage economic development and a greater quality of life, which in turn can attract new development in existing communities. In 2014, Osceola requested assistance through the Local Foods, Local Places program to develop an action plan for achieving those outcomes by investing in a new downtown farmers market, neighborhood community gardens, and new food-related businesses. Implementing these actions, which are described later in this plan in greater detail, can bring several benefits to the community including:

- More economic opportunities for local farmers and business.
- Better access to healthy local food, especially among disadvantaged groups.
- A revitalized downtown that is the economic anchor of the community.

Local Foods, Local Places is supported by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), and the Delta Regional Authority (DRA). These agencies worked with the community to develop the following action plan.

Engagement

Osceola hosted a two-day workshop on March 17 and 18, 2015. The workshop brought together key local, state, and federal agency representatives to envision a better future for Osceola and to identify the steps for getting there. Among the attendees were local elected officials, the Main Street Program,

⁵ ESRI. Retail Goods and Services Expenditures – Osceola, AR.

church officials, local business owners, and concerned citizens; representatives of the Arkansas Health Department, Arkansas Cooperative Extension, and Arkansas Coalition for Obesity Prevention; and federal representatives from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and U.S. Department of Agriculture-Rural Development. Contractors from Renaissance Planning facilitated the workshop.

The first workshop session focused on learning about local values and citizens' vision for the future. The second workshop session dug into opportunities for improving the local food economy and revitalizing downtown and goal setting. The third and final session focused on actions that the community could take to achieve their goals. Workshop attendance is provided in Appendix D. Figure 2 is a summary of the workshop process.



Figure 4 - Workshop attendees are seen here identifying farms in the region that grow food and could supply the Osceola farmers market

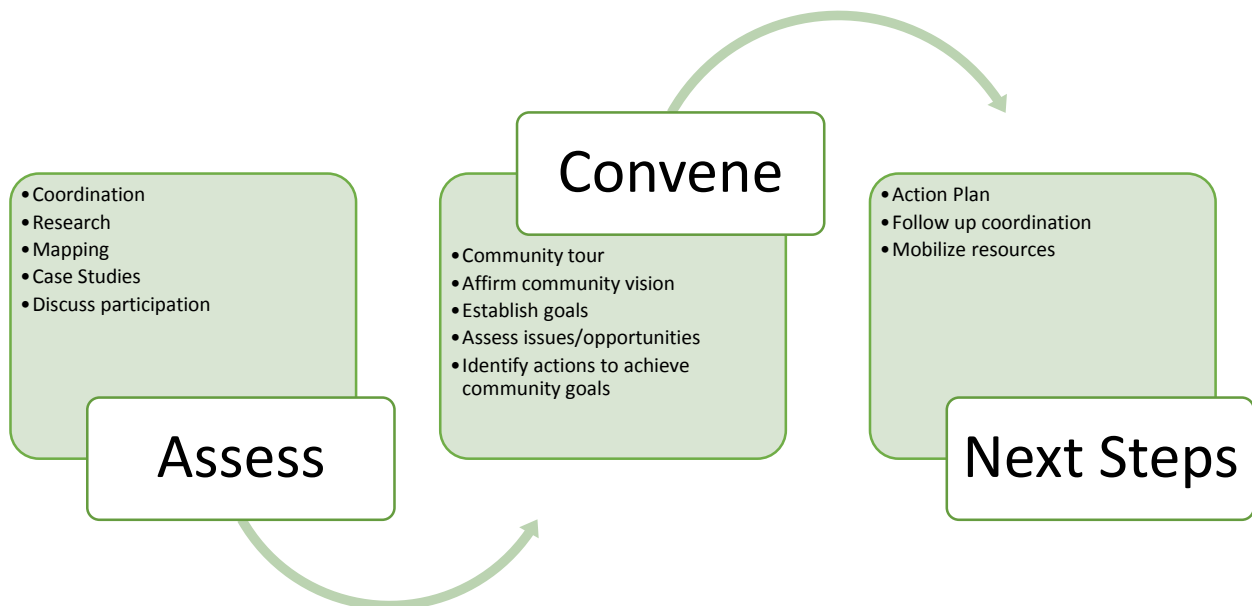


Figure 5 - Technical Assistance Process Diagram

Vision

Osceola's vision for the future has a short-term and a long-term focus. In the short-term, the community envisions more people growing and buying local foods. This vision may be realized through a downtown

farmers market, new community gardens, new restaurants serving local foods, and a shared kitchen space where people can prepare their recipes and possibly sell them to other people in the community.

The long-term vision is an expression of where the community sees itself 20 years in the future. People who attended the Local Foods, Local Places workshop shared the latter through a storytelling exercise. Each person crafted a future news story about something big that happened in Osceola. They then shared these ideas with each other in small groups and worked to synthesize pieces of their stories into a single story with a headline. These headlines reveal a lot about what matters to people and Osceola.

- *Osceola Named to Forbes Best Small Town with under 15,000 people*
 - Osceola decreases its obesity rate by 75%
 - 50% of its high school graduates come back to work
 - Its farmers market is number 1 in the south
 - Osceola has a popular 100-mile long bike trail
- *Osceola Receives National Recognition for Farm-to-Table Dining*
 - A local restaurant won the Beard Award
- *Osceola Celebrate its 20th annual Crawfish, Beers, Bikes, and Blues Festival*
 - The event each year contributes \$250,000 to the local economy

These headlines and the stories people shared paint a picture of Osceola in 2035 that is known as one of the country's best small towns, where its people are healthier than they were in 2015, with a thriving farmers market, a 100-mile bike trail, award winning restaurants serving foods from the Arkansas Delta, and festivals that draw in people from throughout the region and state. The short-term vision of a much stronger local foods economy clearly supports these longer-term desires that people expressed.

Strengths, Challenges, and Opportunities

While the vision paints a picture of a bright future for people living and growing up in Osceola, the workshop attendees realized that the community is not on a trajectory to realize the vision. So the attendees spent time exploring Osceola's strengths, challenges, and opportunities. This section presents the strengths and opportunities that can support the vision of a healthier and thriving Osceola, and some of the challenges that may hold the city back if they are not addressed.

Strengths

- **People** - Osceola's residents care about the community, are willing to get involved to improve it, and have creativity. The strong attendance and participation at the Local Foods, Local Places workshops demonstrates this commitment.
- **Historical Buildings and Community Layout** – Osceola has a charming downtown with historical buildings, a beautiful courthouse, and a walkable street pattern.
- **Jobs** - The region has a good supply of manufacturing jobs. The new Big River Steel plant will add to the number of manufacturing jobs and could bring new residents.
- **Access to Nature** – The city is located on the Mississippi River and has public access to it.

Challenges

- **Poverty and Unemployment** – While Osceola has a growing number of manufacturing jobs, portions of the workforce are not well prepared for those jobs for a variety of reasons. Poverty and high rates of unemployment are a result.

- **Health** – The city and surrounding county have high rates of obesity, diabetes, and other diseases related to diet and exercise.
- **Property Disrepair** – Many downtown buildings and housing in the immediate vicinity of downtown are in a state of disrepair. The market values of these properties are insufficient to attract investment to fix them up. The city also has many buildings that are owned by people who do not live in the area. Getting them to fix their properties or support the vision of downtown revitalization is a major challenge.
- **Human Resources in Short Supply** – Osceola is a fairly small city and many of the people that are involved in civic affairs are stretched thin. The community needs to prioritize the actions that it would like to take, and request support from outside the city to achieve its goals. This is a common problem in many small cities and towns.

Opportunities

- **Delta Soil** – The region has some of the richest soils in the world. Today there is growing concern in Arkansas and throughout the country about the sources of food and the resiliency of the food supply. These concerns have been heightened by the drought in California, which accounts for more than half of the vegetables grown in the United States.⁶
- **Big River Steel** – The new steel plant going in just south of Osceola will bring in hundreds of jobs and millions of dollars in new income to the area. The plant is an opportunity to attract new residents to Osceola who could rehabilitate older housing and support new shops downtown.
- **New Partnerships** – The Local Foods, Local Places workshop brought together local residents, elected officials, and representatives of state and federal agencies that can support Osceola's vision. These new partnerships, if they are maintained over time, can help the city overcome its challenge of having a short supply of people with available time and desire to work on the initiatives describe in this plan.
- **Proximity to Major Markets** – Osceola and the broader Delta region are close to Memphis and Little Rock, and they can play a bigger role in meeting the food needs of these regions. Osceola can also attract people from these regions to visit and explore Osceola and its festivals, and consider putting down roots in the area as new jobs come in with the arrival of Big River Steel.

Figure 6 - Osceola's proximity to the Mississippi River helped attract new investment in steel mills



Action Plan

Osceola's strengths, challenges, and opportunities underlie the goals and actions presented below. Each action either aims to address a challenge, or take advantage of a strength or opportunity. The actions are steps that Osceola can take in the near term to move towards its vision of a strong local food

⁶ U.S. Department of Agriculture – National Agriculture Statistics Service. *Vegetables Annual Summary*. http://www.nass.usda.gov/Surveys/Guide_to_NASS_Surveys/Vegetables/index.asp. Accessed April 21, 2015.

economy supporting jobs and health and a more vibrant downtown. Many of the actions will help the community continue to form partnerships and take action together. As in any community, there are many competing ideas about the best ways to move forward. But the workshop participants reached a workable consensus around these goals and actions. The goals and action items are presented in Appendix A in their complete form, which includes a time frame, lead role, supporting cast, cost, funding sources, and near-term steps.

Goal 1 - Coordinate and enhance healthy foods education with an emphasis on outreach to youth.

- **Action 1.1** - Meet with the school district staff that develop curriculum to pitch the idea of a new healthy foods and cooking instruction program, modeled after Cooking Matters.⁷
- **Action 1.2** - Reach an agreement between the Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service and the Osceola School District to use SNAP-Ed resources to initiate the healthy foods and cooking initiative throughout the school district.
- **Action 1.3** - Use communication tools (social media, newsletters, and surveys) to engage and educate parents on nutrition and the influence of food on their children's health.
- **Action 1.4** – Participate in the Arkansas Coalition for Obesity Prevention's Growing Healthy Communities and Mayors Mentoring Mayors programs.

Goal 2 - Study the feasibility of a farmers market in downtown Osceola and determine how to operate, manage, and fund it.

- **Action 2.1** - Establish the Farmers Market Working Group with a lead person that will coordinate their work to open a farmers market for the 2016 season.
- **Action 2.2** - Study the feasibility of a farmers market and develop a plan for operating it. Start by inviting Bev Dunaway from the Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service to present about starting a new market to the Main Street Osceola Board.
- **Action 2.3** - Establish farmers market guidelines that address key questions, such as what can be sold, from where it must be grown, and the split between food vendors and arts/crafts vendors. Create a vendor application to collect this information.
- **Action 2.4** - Pursue a grant to launch the permanent downtown farmers market in 2016. The grant can cover marketing materials and equipment.

Goal 3 - Select a location and design for a downtown farmers market.

- **Action 3.1** - Evaluate sites based on criteria selected by the Local Foods, Local Places Steering Committee, which include visibility for customers, convenience for vendors and customers, access (walkable and available parking), water and electric hookups, perception of safety, ease of maintenance, fun, and shade.
- **Action 3.2** - Update local zoning codes or other ordinances to address any potential obstacles to setting up a farmers market or community gardens, particularly in areas zoned for commercial uses where there may be obstacles.

⁷ To learn more about the Cooking Matters program, visit this site: <http://cookingmatters.org/>

- **Action 3.3** - Conduct a citizen survey at the Osceola Heritage Music Fest and survey downtown businesses to collect information that would help Main Street Osceola set up a successful farmers market.

Goal 4 - Increase the amount of food grown in our community.

- **Action 4.1** - Develop a directory and map of local farms, markets, roadside stands, and other local food outlets and publish it online for customers and other people interested in local foods.
- **Action 4.2** - Conduct a survey of the region's producers to find out what they grow and to which markets they sell (such as wholesale and/or existing farmers markets).
- **Action 4.3** - Develop a guide for individuals or groups that would like to start a community garden in their neighborhood.

Goal 5 - Identify focus areas downtown where the City can target infrastructure improvements and cleanup efforts, and establish policies to attract investment.

- **Action 5.1** - Create a vision and strategic plan for downtown Osceola.
- **Action 5.2** - Organize and host a workshop on tax credit financing for property owners interested in improving their downtown properties.
- **Action 5.3** - Create an online resource of all grants, incentives (such as tax credits), and resources (such as a property inventory) for downtown development.
- **Action 5.4** - Target the downtown area and potential farmers market sites during the 2015 Great American Clean Up event in Osceola starting May 9.

Implementation

In the immediate future, Osceola plans to focus its energy on testing some of the big ideas generated or discussed during the workshop. The city is in the beginning stages of fostering a stronger local food economy and it is important to make sure an idea has broad support and is feasible before allocating resources to it.

High Priority Actions

The community's initial steps will involve studying the feasibility of a downtown farmers market by talking with potential customers and vendors (Actions 3.3 and 4.2) and forming a Farmers Market Working Group (Action 2.1). Main Street Osceola will play a leading role in these actions, which require little in terms of financial resources to get started. Main Street Osceola also plans to introduce its board to the Action Plan and gauge their interest in the actions contained herein.

The Local Foods, Local Places Steering Committee identified a few other actions that could move forward quickly and possibly with support from the Delta Regional Authority, which is giving Osceola and four other Delta communities priority access to funding in its Rural Community Advancement Program (RCAP). Anything eligible for USDA's Rural Business Development Grants program is eligible for RCAP. These high priority actions include a Downtown Vision and Strategic Plan that takes a long-term look at downtown's needs and priorities (Action 5.1) and a guide and potentially materials necessary to support a citywide community gardens program (Action 4.3). The idea behind this program is not for the city to directly manage community gardens, but provide the information and potentially some of the tools and supplies necessary to support individuals or groups that would like to start gardens on vacant properties in their neighborhoods.

Main Street Osceola also identified a downtown building that it would like to acquire and use to support many of the actions listed in this plan. Main Street Osceola named a number of potential uses for this building including continuing education programs (supports Goal 1), community events, storage for community events and the farmers market (supports Goals 2 and 3), meeting space for downtown businesses that don't have sufficient space, a kitchen that existing downtown businesses and new businesses could use, a place to support pop-up businesses (essentially a small incubator), and space for an indoor crafts festival.

Livability Principles Advanced by Action Plan

The Local Foods, Local Places program is supported by the Federal Partnerships for Sustainable Communities. The Partnerships includes EPA, DOT, and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. These agencies have been working since 2009 to incorporate livability considerations into their policies and funding programs. This section describes how Osceola's Action Plan supports the livability principles.

Provide more Transportation Choices

While this livability principle was not a primary focus of the workshop, Osceola's walkable downtown street grid is a strength. However, many of the businesses have closed and moved from the downtown area. So while it is walkable, there are not many things to which a person would walk. This action plan calls for a downtown farmers market, which will give people living near downtown better access to healthy foods and a destination that will encourage more people to walk and interact.

Promote Equitable, Affordable Housing

Fixing the housing and commercial building stock in downtown Osceola is a high priority of the community. Many of downtown Osceola's buildings have space that could be affordable housing. This housing would also be close to shops and restaurants downtown, allowing new residents to depend less on a car to meet their daily needs.

Enhance Economic Competitiveness

Osceola's Action Plan is most closely linked to this livability principle. The community hopes to stimulate new jobs and help people acquire new skills that they can use to support themselves and potentially launch new businesses or products. The Action Plan lays out the first steps in moving the community and region towards a more diverse economy and farming scene in which the Delta's rich soils also support jobs in growing fruits, vegetables, and other local food products.

Support Existing Communities

Osceola is an existing community with large sunk investments in transportation, water, sewer, communications, and energy infrastructure. This plan lays out some initial steps that Osceola can use to make existing neighborhoods more livable and attractive to investment. That way as new jobs come into the community and people are considering where to live, they may find these communities to be attractive places to settle. This approach to development takes makes full use of existing local infrastructure, which is good for stressed local budgets.

Coordination and Leverage Federal Policies and Investment

The Local Foods, Local Places workshop brought together people from many state and federal agencies. The new relationships formed both within the city and with people outside of the community can attract

new resources to support implementation of this action plan. It is important to nurture these new relationships by finding ways to stay engaged with each other.

Value Communities and Neighborhoods

This action plan demonstrates a strong value for Osceola's communities and neighborhoods. It lays out a path for investing resources in these places and building social capital by connecting people through local foods, community gardening, and more vibrant public spaces, such as the downtown and future farmers market.

Appendices

- Appendix A – Action Plan Details
- Appendix B – Local and Regional Maps
- Appendix C – Key Health and Agriculture Data
- Appendix D – Workshop Participants
- Appendix E – Funding Resources
- Appendix F – References
- Appendix G – Presentation Slides

Appendix A:

Action Plan Details

GOAL 1: Coordinate and enhance healthy foods education with an emphasis on outreach to youth.

Action 1.1: Meet with the school district staff that develop curriculum to pitch the idea of a new healthy foods and cooking instruction program, modeled after Cooking Matters. ¹		
Why is this important?	The market for healthy local foods is small in Osceola. Increasing demand for healthy foods starts with children, who will eventually constitute the market. Their tastes and preferences are critical for sustaining the farmers market and community gardens over the long term. Education will provide new cooking skills as well as a taste and appreciation for healthy foods.	
Measures of Success	Development of a new healthy foods and cooking curriculum in the school district	
Timeframe for Completion	Short term (within 3 months) to set up a meeting	
Taking the Lead	University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service local agent	
Supporting Cast	Cindy England (school district food service), Southern Bancorp, Arkansas Head Start (Mississippi Co. EOC), producers, and teachers	
Cost Estimate	Dollars	Time
	None	Volunteer or staff time to set up a meeting and make connections
Possible Funding Sources	SNAP-Ed ² (offered through the U of A Cooperative Extension) offers funding for education programs.	

Action 1.2: Reach an agreement between the Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service and the Osceola School District to use SNAP-Ed resources to initiate the healthy foods and cooking initiative throughout the school district		
Why is this important?	To reach a large number of students, who will eventually be the market for healthy and local foods.	
Measures of Success	- Cooperation between schools - The number of students participating - Health statistics pre and post curriculum	
Timeframe for Completion	Planning and outreach to learn more about SNAP-Ed in the short term; implementation in the mid-to-long term	
Taking the Lead	University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service local agent and the Osceola School District	
Supporting Cast	City of Osceola, Arkansas Head Start (Mississippi Co. EOC), and Wilson Gardens, Mississippi County, and local non-profit organizations focused on health and wellness	

¹ To learn more about the Cooking Matters program, visit this site: <http://cookingmatters.org/>

² University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service. SNAP-Ed (funding for nutrition education for SNAP recipients). <http://www.uaex.edu/health-living/food-nutrition/eating-well/snap-ed.aspx>

Action 1.2: Reach an agreement between the Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service and the Osceola School District to use SNAP-Ed resources to initiate the healthy foods and cooking initiative throughout the school district		
Cost Estimate	Dollars	Time
	Medium	Volunteer effort to launch program
Possible Funding Sources	SNAP-Ed (through the U of A Cooperative Extension Service)	

Action 1.3: Use communication tools (social media, newsletters, and surveys) to engage and educate parents on nutrition and the influence of food on their children’s health		
Why is this important?	There is a general lack of awareness in how food choices influence health. Education is an important first step in changing habits and strengthening communities around food.	
Measures of Success	County health statistics improve relative to peers³	
Timeframe for Completion	Medium to long term. Start with parent newsletters and surveys before expanding the scope of the program	
Taking the Lead	The University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service local agent with support of local teachers	
Supporting Cast	City of Osceola, Mississippi County, Arkansas Head Start (Mississippi Co. EOC), Wilson Gardens, and non-profit organizations focused on health and wellness	
Cost Estimate	Dollars	Time
	Medium	Volunteer effort to launch program
Possible Funding Sources	SNAP-Ed (through the U of A Cooperative Extension Service)	

Action 1.4: Participate in the Arkansas Coalition for Obesity Prevention’s Growing Healthy Communities and Mayors Mentoring Mayors programs. ⁴		
Why is this important?	The Arkansas Coalition for Obesity Prevention participated in the workshop and offers many resources for communities looking to improve health and access to local foods. Participation in the Growing Health Communities program will help to ensure that the energy and momentum generated through the Local Foods, Local Places program continues.	
Measures of Success	Osceola advances through each of the three Growing Healthy Communities recognition levels.	
Timeframe for Completion	- Short term: Recognition as an Emerging Community - Short term: Participation in Mayors Mentoring Mayors	

³ Track local health and food statistics with the Healthy Food Access Portal. <http://www.healthyfoodaccess.org/get-started/research-your-community>.

⁴ Learn more about the Arkansas Coalition for Obesity Prevention’s Growing Healthy Communities and Mayors Mentoring Mayors programs here: <http://www.arkansasobesity.org/>.

Action 1.4: Participate in the Arkansas Coalition for Obesity Prevention's Growing Healthy Communities and Mayors Mentoring Mayors programs.⁴		
	• Mid-term: Recognition as a Blossoming Community and then a Thriving Community	
Taking the Lead	Sally Wilson, City of Osceola	
Supporting Cast	Arkansas Coalition for Obesity Prevention, the Local Foods, Local Places Steering Committee	
Cost Estimate	Dollars	Time
	Low or none	Time to participate in ArCOP meetings, conferences, and to continue local coordination activities started by the Local Foods, Local Places program
Possible Funding Sources	Not necessary	

GOAL 2: Study the feasibility of a farmers market in downtown Osceola and determine how to operate, manage, and fund it.

Action 2.1: Establish the Farmers Market Working Group with a lead person that will coordinate their work to open a farmers market for the 2016 season		
Why is this important?	Setting up the farmers market will take work and support from many people in the community, especially to coordinate the vendors, recruit vendors, promote the market, and handle logistics. The Farmers Market Working Group can delegate these tasks and pursue funding opportunities. The Working Group will be a subcommittee of Main Street Osceola (a combination of the economic development and promotions committees).	
Measures of Success	• Consumer and vendor feedback on market convenience • Plan for launching the market in 2016	
Timeframe for Completion	Short term (to organize the farmers market for 2016)	
Taking the Lead	Main Street Osceola (economic development and promotions committees)	
Supporting Cast	City and county officials and Bev Dunaway at the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension (their in-house farmers market expert). Bev can be reached at bdunaway@uaex.edu or (870) 213-5785	
Cost Estimate	Dollars	Time
	Low or none	Working Group volunteer time
Possible Funding Sources	TBD (if necessary)	

Action 2.2: Study the feasibility of a farmers market and develop a plan for operating it. Start by inviting Bev Dunaway from the Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service to present about starting a new market to the Main Street Osceola Board.		
Why is this important?	Establishing a vision and setting goals will help make the farmers market sustainable in the long run. The goals should be informed by an assessment of the producer supply and consumer demand for a farmers market. Bev Dunaway is a valuable resource who specializes in helping set up farmers markets in Arkansas.	
Measures of Success	• Completion of a plan • Goals for vendors, customers, and revenues	
Timeframe for Completion	Winter 2016	
Taking the Lead	Farmers Market Working Group	
Supporting Cast	Vendors, City of Osceola, and everyone that attended the 2015 Local Foods, Local Places workshop.	
Cost Estimate	Dollars	Time
	Medium	Volunteer effort by Farmers Market Working Group
Possible Funding Sources	Planning is an eligible use of the USDA Farmers Market Promotion Program. The USDA program funds planning and other actions that support farmers markets for between \$15,000 and \$100,000. Applications for the 2015 round are due May 14, 2015. ⁵	

Action 2.3: Establish farmers market guidelines that address key questions, such as what can be sold, from where it must be grown, and the split between food vendors and arts/crafts vendors. Create a vendor application to collect this information.		
Why is this important?	Diversity of produce is critical. Customers want to have confidence that they can find certain items when they visit the market. The guidelines should lay out what kind of produce can be sold (such as vegetables, fruits, eggs, meat, etc.) and what percent of crafts/arts vendors will be allowed. Taking the time to create guidelines ensures that Osceola will get the type of market it desires (i.e. it should primarily be a farmers market, not a flea market)	
Measures of Success	• Do the guidelines give Osceola the type of market it prefers • Diversity of products that are available	
Timeframe for Completion	Medium term (before the start of the 2016 farmers market season)	
Taking the Lead	Farmers Market Working Group	
Supporting Cast	Main Street Osceola, Chamber of Commerce, City of Osceola	
Cost Estimate	Dollars	Time

⁵ USDA Agricultural Marketing Service. Farmers Market Promotion Program. <http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/fmpp>.

Action 2.3: Establish farmers market guidelines that address key questions, such as what can be sold, from where it must be grown, and the split between food vendors and arts/crafts vendors. Create a vendor application to collect this information.		
	Low to none	Farmers Market Working Group volunteer time
Possible Funding Sources	TBD (if necessary)	

Action 2.4: Pursue a grant to launch the permanent downtown farmers market in 2016. The grant can cover marketing materials and equipment		
Why is this important?	Following the temporary 2015 market, the Farmers Market Working Group will want to create a brand, promote the market, obtain any necessary equipment (such as EBT system for SNAP benefits), and secure funds for any rent that is required. Funds will be needed to grow the market over time.	
Measures of Success	- Win grant funding - Financial support from the community to demonstrate a long-term commitment to the market	
Timeframe for Completion	Medium to long term (1 to 3 years to win grant funds)	
Taking the Lead	Farmers Market Working Group	
Supporting Cast	Main Street Osceola, East Arkansas Planning and Development District (grant writing), Chamber of Commerce (promotion), and City of Osceola Block Grant (from the General Improvement Fund), and the Arkansas Coalition for Obesity Prevention.	
Cost Estimate	Dollars	Time
	Medium (staff, equipment, and marketing expenses)	Farmers Market Working Group volunteer time
Possible Funding Sources	Delta Regional Authority RCAP funding, City of Osceola Block Grant (from the General Improvement Fund), USDA Agricultural Marketing Service Farmers Market Promotion Program	

GOAL 3: Select a location and design for a downtown farmers market.

Action 3.1: Evaluate sites based on criteria selected by the Local Foods, Local Places Steering Committee, which include visibility for customers, convenience for vendors and customers, access (walkable and available parking), water and electric hookups, perception of safety, ease of maintenance, fun, and shade.		
Why is this important?	The criteria are key to selecting the best possible site downtown	
Measures of Success	- Complete decision matrix with scores for each possible site - A survey of potential customers at the Crawfish Festival	
Timeframe for Completion	Short term (1 month)	

Action 3.1: Evaluate sites based on criteria selected by the Local Foods, Local Places Steering Committee, which include visibility for customers, convenience for vendors and customers, access (walkable and available parking), water and electric hookups, perception of safety, ease of maintenance, fun, and shade.		
Taking the Lead	Farmers Market Working Group	
Supporting Cast	Local Foods, Local Places Steering Committee	
Cost Estimate	Dollars	Time
	Low or none	Volunteer time to complete the decision matrix and create a survey
Possible Funding Sources	TBD (if necessary)	

Action 3.2: Update local zoning codes or other ordinances to address any potential obstacles to setting up a farmers market or community gardens, particularly in areas zoned for commercial uses where there may be obstacles		
Why is this important?	The local codes must be followed. If they limit the ability to have a farmers market or community garden, they may be amended by an action of the City Council.	
Measures of Success	- Opinion from the city's code enforcement officer on the ability for set up a farmers market and community garden in different zoning districts - Code is updated if necessary	
Timeframe for Completion	Short term (immediately, unless a zoning change is necessary). Changing the zoning ordinance would take about 30 days	
Taking the Lead	Main Street Osceola, the Osceola City Council, and the Code Enforcement Officer	
Supporting Cast	None	
Cost Estimate	Dollars	Time
	None	Working Group volunteer time to examine codes and staff time to provide opinion
Possible Funding Sources	None	

Action 3.3: Conduct a citizen survey at the Osceola Heritage Music Fest and survey downtown businesses to collect information that would help Main Street Osceola set up a successful farmers market		
Why is this important?	Customer participation is critical to success. Asking citizens, visitors, and businesses questions about their preferences for a farmers market can help the Working Group set up a successful market.	
Measures of Success	The number of completed surveys (ideally several dozen)	

Action 3.3: Conduct a citizen survey at the Osceola Heritage Music Fest and survey downtown businesses to collect information that would help Main Street Osceola set up a successful farmers market		
	Information about citizens' preferred days and times for the market, the types of produce they would like to buy, and basic information about where they live (in or out of town?)	
Timeframe for Completion	Short term (May 16-17)	
Taking the Lead	Main Street Osceola	
Supporting Cast	Local student volunteers to help distribute and collect the surveys	
Cost Estimate	Dollars	Time
	Low (cost of printing)	Working Group volunteer time to develop the survey
Possible Funding Sources	TBD (if necessary)	

GOAL 4: Increase the amount of food grown in our community.

Action 4.1: Develop a directory and map of local farms, markets, roadside stands, and other local food outlets and publish it online for customers and other people interested in local foods.		
Why is this important?	Workshop attendees found that the number of farms growing food exceeded their expectations. The directory will increase awareness of local foods and provide information for where people may be able to purchase local foods or pick fruits/vegetables.	
Measures of Success	- The directory/map is published - The directory/map is available in each downtown business, city hall, and the chamber of commerce	
Timeframe for Completion	Mid-term (1 year and 1 month). Following a survey of producers (see Action 4.2)	
Taking the Lead	Osceola Chamber of Commerce	
Supporting Cast	Brian Holthouse and Wilson Gardens, using data from workshop map	
Cost Estimate	Dollars	Time
	Low (printing and mapping)	Volunteer support
Possible Funding Sources	East Arkansas Planning and Development District (mapping support)	

Action 4.2: Conduct a survey of the region's producers to find out what they grow and to which markets they sell (such as wholesale and/or existing farmers markets).	
Why is this important?	This will provide critical information about the capacity of local producers. It will also help the Farmers Market Working Group build new relationships with vendors and assist in recruiting them to the Osceola Downtown Farmers Market. The survey will also provide

Action 4.2: Conduct a survey of the region’s producers to find out what they grow and to which markets they sell (such as wholesale and/or existing farmers markets).		
	information about gaps in the existing vendor base and supply of fresh local foods.	
Measures of Success	The number of farms or other potential vendors that complete the survey (15 to 25 is the goal)	
Timeframe for Completion	Mid-term (1 year). The goal is to complete the survey in advance of the 2016 farmers market	
Taking the Lead	Farmers Market Working Group	
Supporting Cast	Main Street Osceola, Mississippi County Master Gardeners, University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension, East Arkansas Planning and Development District	
Cost Estimate	Dollars	Time
	Low cost	Volunteer effort to design survey, make calls, and summarize results
Possible Funding Sources	TBD (if necessary)	

Action 4.3: Develop a guide for individuals or groups that would like to start a community garden in their neighborhood.		
Why is this important?	Rather than any one group or the city government organizing and managing gardens, the community would like to support and nurture any people or groups that would like to start a garden. An important first step is to provide people with information about how they can start a garden, demonstrate best practices through a pilot garden, and provide an inventory of potential garden sites (such as land owned by the city that it would be willing to lease through a “side yard” program). ⁶	
Measures of Success	- The number of gardens that people or groups establish - The number of vacant lots transformed into gardens	
Timeframe for Completion	Short term (1 month) to organize a Call to Action Meeting and 3 to 6 months to establish a demonstration garden	
Taking the Lead	Mississippi County Master Gardeners with support from Deb Felske and Cecil McDonald (Mississippi County EOC)	
Supporting Cast	Osceola citizens that are interested in starting a garden	
Cost Estimate	Dollars	Time
	Low	Volunteer efforts

⁶ The Cleveland, Ohio region has a land bank that will sell vacant lots to neighbors at steeply discounted rates for many purposes, including gardens. Many cities large and small have used similar programs to maintain vacant lots and encourage gardening. More information about the Cleveland region’s effort can be found here: <http://www.cuyahogalandbank.org/sideYard.php>.

Action 4.3: Develop a guide for individuals or groups that would like to start a community garden in their neighborhood.	
Possible Funding Sources	Potential for donations including seeds and transplants (Wilson Gardens), land (City of Osceola), and lumber/materials. Water is another key consideration.

GOAL 5: Identify focus areas downtown where the City can target infrastructure improvements and cleanup efforts, and establish policies to attract investment.

Action 5.1: Create a vision and strategic plan for downtown Osceola		
Why is this important?	Downtown Osceola needs a unified vision. The financial resources and time available to focus on new projects are limited. Downtown would benefit from a work session to create a vision for downtown's future and to identify where to dedicate limited resources and energy.	
Measures of Success	The city adopts a vision statement and plan for its downtown	
Timeframe for Completion	Long term (12 months to 3 years)	
Taking the Lead	Main Street Osceola and reNEW Osceola	
Supporting Cast	Osceola Center for Arts and Heritage and the City of Osceola	
Cost Estimate	Dollars	Time
	Medium (>\$15,000)	Staff time to manage the project
Possible Funding Sources	Delta Regional Authority RCAP funds, University of Arkansas Community Design Center. Delta Regional Authority Rural Community Assistance Program	

Action 5.2: Organize and host a workshop on tax credit financing for property owners interested in improving their downtown properties.		
Why is this important?	Osceola has a high rate of vacant downtown properties. There are many federal and state tax credits programs available to help property owners for purposes such as rehabilitating historic buildings and providing affordable housing. Education on the various programs can help owners tap into these resources.	
Measures of Success	- Attendance at the workshop - Investment in downtown buildings - Applications for tax credits	
Timeframe for Completion	Medium (6 to 12 months). Start by identifying property owners and then contact Tom Marr (Rehabilitation Tax Credit Coordinator at the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program) to schedule a workshop	
Taking the Lead	Main Street Osceola and reNEW Osceola	

Action 5.2: Organize and host a workshop on tax credit financing for property owners interested in improving their downtown properties.		
Supporting Cast	East Arkansas Planning and Development District, Osceola Chamber of Commerce, City of Osceola, Arkansas Historic Preservation Program	
Cost Estimate	Dollars	Time
	None or low (if food provided)	Participants time to attend workshop and volunteers to organize it
Possible Funding Sources	TBD (if necessary)	

Action 5.3: Create an online resource of all grants, incentives (such as tax credits), and resources (such as a property inventory) for downtown development.		
Why is this important?	Information should be easily accessible for anyone that is interested in investing in downtown Osceola.	
Measures of Success	- Well organized information is available on a webpage - Number of people that visit the webpage	
Timeframe for Completion	Ongoing activity	
Taking the Lead	Main Street Osceola and reNEW Osceola with support from Sally Wilson	
Supporting Cast	East Arkansas Planning and Development District, Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, Arkansas Economic Development Commission.	
Cost Estimate	Dollars	Time
	None	Staff and volunteer time
Possible Funding Sources	TBD (if necessary)	

Action 5.4: Target the downtown area and potential farmers market sites during the 2015 Great American Clean Up event in Osceola starting May 9.	
Why is this important?	Vacant properties can quickly become overgrown with vegetation or litter. The Great American Clean Up in Osceola is a volunteer program through which people give their time to clean up parts of the city. Focusing on the downtown area will help improve perception of safety and make it a more attractive place for people to congregate. The city may also want to look at how Stuttgart, Arkansas has improved perceptions of downtown through its “Paint the Town” program. ⁷
Measures of Success	Number of downtown sites that are cleaned up
Timeframe for Completion	Short term (Spring 2015)

⁷ More information about Stuttgart’s Paint the Town program is available here: <http://www.gozarks.com/cbra/index.htm>.

Action 5.4: Target the downtown area and potential farmers market sites during the 2015 Great American Clean Up event in Osceola starting May 9.		
Taking the Lead	Osceola Center for Arts and Heritage (OCAH)	
Supporting Cast	Civic organizations, Boy Scouts, 4-H, high school students, and local churches	
Cost Estimate	Dollars	Time
	None	Volunteer labor
Possible Funding Sources	Not applicable	

Appendix B:

Local and Regional Maps

This appendix includes a pair of maps prepared by workshop participants. The first is a map of growers and markets for local foods in the Osceola region. The second highlights specific sites that represent an opportunity for revitalizing downtown Osceola.

The first map shows the location of several farms and several markets in northeast Arkansas and western Tennessee. Workshop participants identified the farms. There are likely several other farms that are growing fruits and vegetables and raising meat within an hour of Osceola. The purpose of this map is not to identify every producer, but to give people a sense for what is already happening in the local food economy. The map is followed by a table that identifies each point on the map.

The second map is a vision map for downtown Osceola. It shows three things:

- **Preferred Redevelopment Sites** – These are properties that workshop participants felt need attention and are well situated for redevelopment or renovation. They are mostly vacant.
- **Potential Farmers Market Sites** – These are sites that workshop participants felt could be suitable for a downtown farmers market.
- **Potential Community Garden Sites** – These are sites that workshop participants felt could be suitable for community gardens.

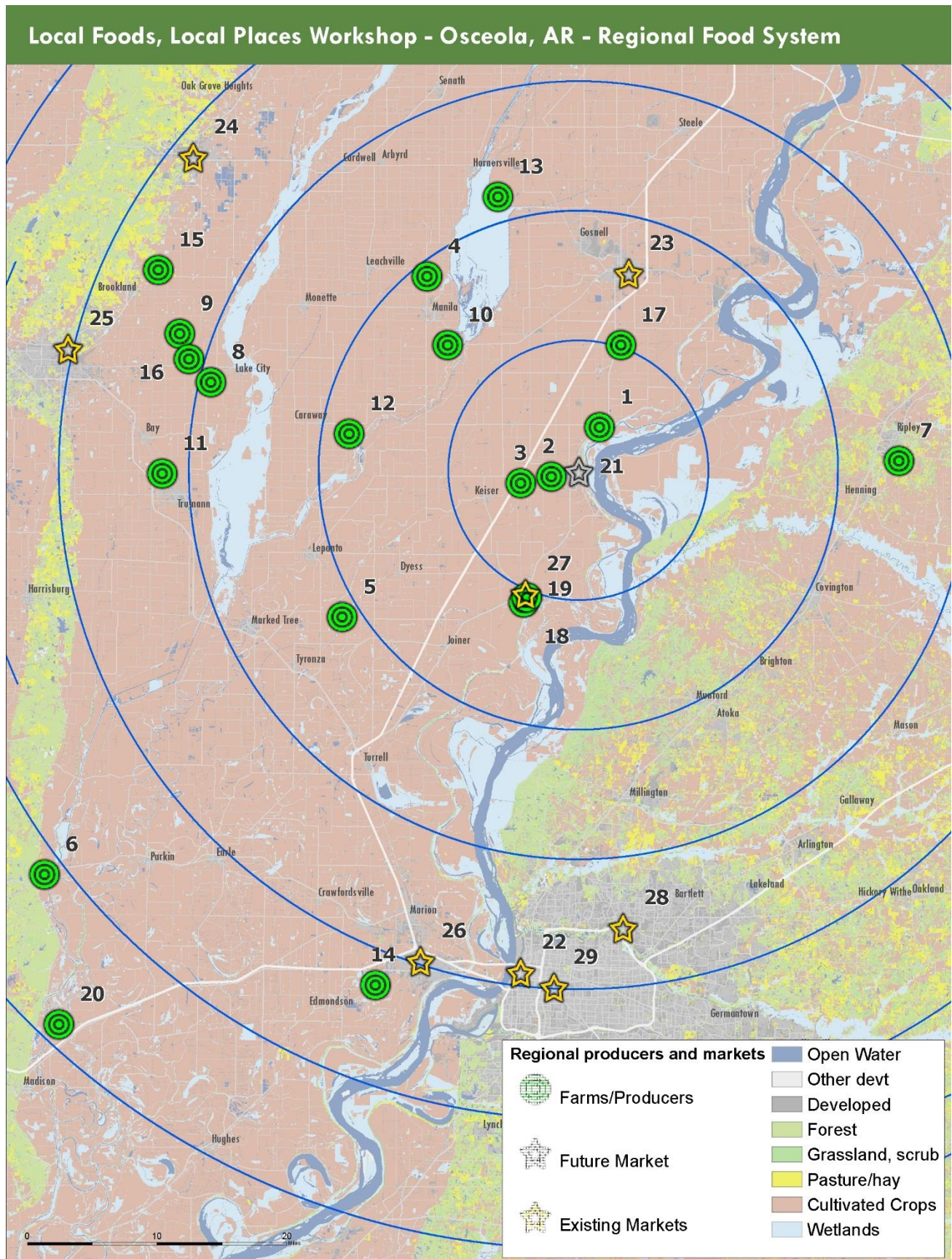
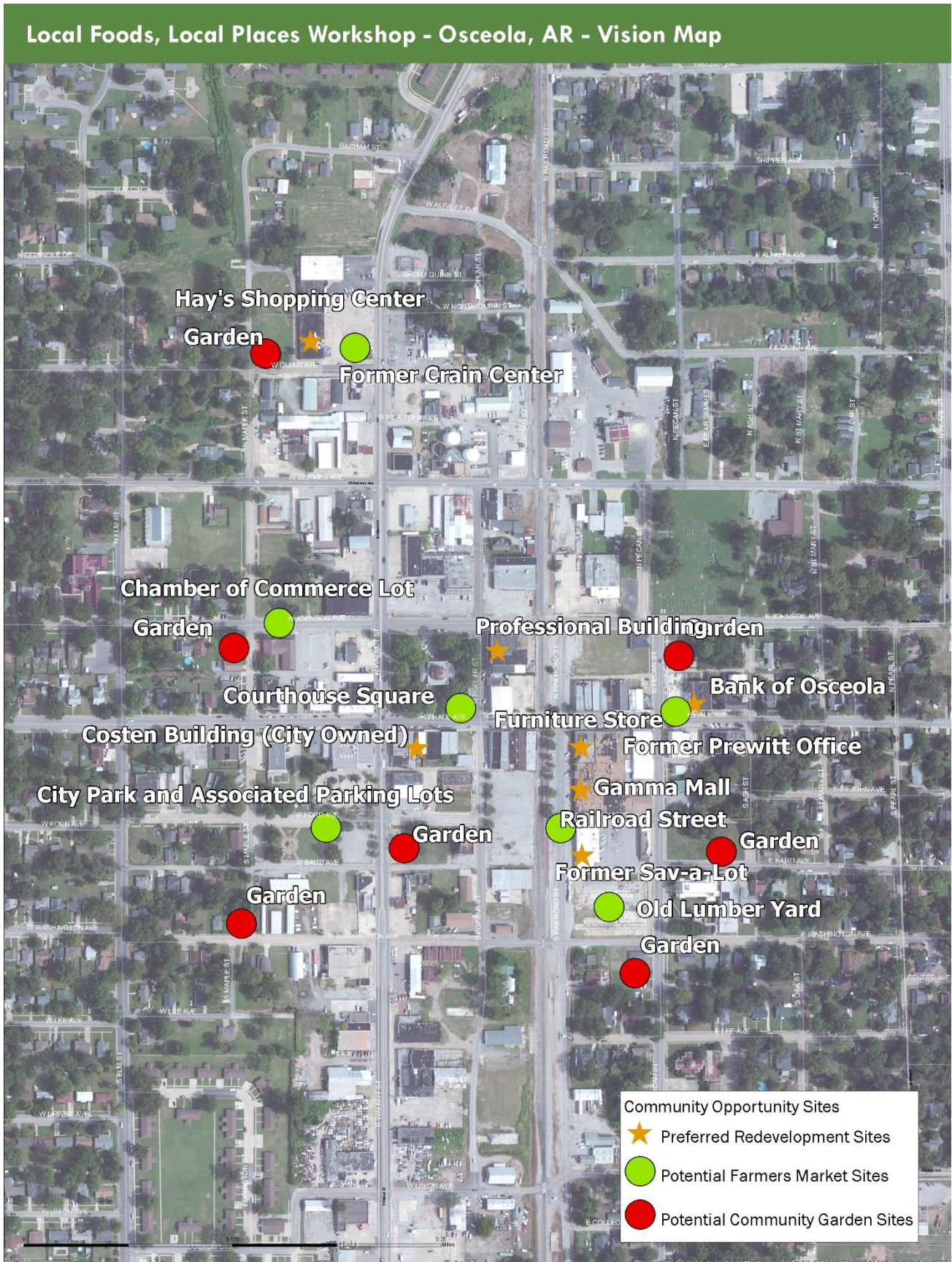


Table 1 - Regional Food System Map Key

Point	Description	Notes
1	Hanna Farms	Grains, vegetables
2	Holt House Garden	Vegetables and pecans
3	County Extension Garden	Produce
4	Swihart Orchards	Peaches
5	Forreter Farm	Vegetables (commercial grower)
6	Brown Sweet Potato Farm	Sweet potatoes
7	Ripley's Tomato Farm	Tomatoes (commercial)
8	Lake City Vegetables	Vegetables
9	Nine Oaks Ranch	Beef
10	Chicken Lady	Chickens and Eggs
11	Riethbaum Farms	
12	Pendergrast Pecan Orchard	Pecans
13	Watermelon Farm	Watermelons
14	Del Sol Farms	Organic produce
15	Muscadine Farm	Muscadine and blueberries
16	Honey Farm	
17	Pat and Clyde	Peas, tomatoes, watermelon, squash
18	Pea Patch	Purple Hull Peas
19	Wilson Farm	Vegetables
20	Seven Harvest	Organic vegetables and herbs
21	Osceola Farmers Market	Future
22	Downtown Memphis	
23	Blytheville Farmers Market	Coming summer 2015
24	Paragould Farmers Market	
25	ASU Regional Farmers Market (Jonesboro)	
26	Delta Market (West Memphis)	
27	Wilson Gardens	
28	Agricenter Farmers Market (Shelby)	
29	Cooper-Young Community Farmers Market (Memphis)	



Appendix C:

Key Health & Agriculture Data

This appendix provides some key health and agriculture data. These data may be useful as the City of Osceola and local organizations pursue grant funding for their priorities.

Table 1 - Health Indicators

Health Indicator ¹	Mississippi County	Relative to Peer Counties
Adults with Diabetes	10.2%	On Par
Adult Obesity Rate	44%	Worse
Adults Reporting No Exercise in Last Month	42%	Worse
People that are Low Income and do not Live Near a Grocery Store	6.9%	On Par

Table 2 - Mississippi County Agriculture Statistics for 2007 and 2012

Local Agriculture Statistic ²	2007	2012
Total Farms	369	347
Vegetable Farms	6	6
Fruit, Tree Nut, and Berry Farms	7	2
Livestock, Poultry, and their Products Farms	40	25
Total Agricultural Sales	\$196 million	\$315 million
Agricultural Sales Direct to Consumers	\$28,000	\$51,000

¹ CDC. Community Health Status Indicators 2015. <http://wwwn.cdc.gov/communityhealth>.

² USDA. 2012 Census of Agriculture. <http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2012/>.

Appendix D:

Workshop Participants

Workshop Participants

First Name	Last Name	Affiliation	Phone	E-Mail	Planning Comm.
John	Aker	Delta Cuisine	870-733-6755	john@deltacuisine.org	
Tommy	Baker	Main St. Osceola	501-412-6344	Tbaker7343@sbcglobal.net	
Sandra	Collins	Integral Enterprises	870-822-1380	sc@integralenterprisesllc.net	
Laura	Cook	Ar. Dept. of Health	870-919-4732	Laura.cook2@arkansas.gov	
Samantha	Evans	Main St. Ark	501-324-9356	samantha@arkansasheritage.org	
Bryan	Exum	USDA-RD	870-972-4671	Bryon.exum@ar.usda.gov	
Deb	Felske	Osceola	870-549-2877	debrafelske@yahoo.com	Yes
Reid	Fergus	Main St. Osceola	870-622-5214	reidfergus@sbcglobal.net	Yes
Susan	Fetsch	Main St. Osceola	870-563-6177	mainstreetosceola@sbcglobal.net	Yes
Carrie	Fisher	EAPDD	870-932-3957	cfisher@eapdd.com	
Michael	Hanna	Hanna Farm	870-623-2406	Hannafarm1932@gmail.com	
Lea	Hedger	Downtown Dev. Comm.			
Tony	Hill	1 st United Methodist	870-563-2688	tony-hill@earthlink.net	
Walter	Holloway	Ark. Dept. of Health	870-563-2521	Walter.holloway@arkansas.org	
Brian	Holthouse		870-683-4030	bahnosceola@yahoo.com	Yes
Paul	Huenefeld	The Pea Patch	870-658-8428		
Lauren	Isbell	Southern Bancorp	870-273-4960	Lauren.isbell@southernpartners.org	
Mary	Kemp	US EPA	214-665-8358	Kemp.mary@epa.gov	
Dickie	Kennemore	Mayor, Osceola	870-622-4740		
Cecil	McDonald	MC AEOC	870-278-3857	mrcmcdonald@gmail.com	
Sandra	Mitchell	Shalom	870-838-4397	slmkennedy@yahoo.com	
Jason	Osborn	U of A Extension	870-762-2075	josborn@uaex.edu	Yes

Dot	Pollock		870-563-0455		
Pam	Pruett	U of A Extension	870-762-2075	ppruett@uaex.edu	Yes
Melissa	Rivers				
Joy	Rockenbach	Ark. Dept. of Health & ArCOP	501-944-5357	Joy.rockenbach@arkansas.gov	
Lynn	Rockenbach	AARP & ArCOP	501-749-3256	2rocksrn@att.net	
Sherman	Smith	EAPDD	870-351-7627	ssmith@eapdd.com	
Michelle	Stilwell	Main St. Osceola	870-281-6527	Michelles1974@hotmail.com	
Joe	Thomas	Osceola Hist. Dist.	870-563-6790	joethomas@rittermail.com	
Ammi	Tucker	Chamber of Commerce	870-563-2281	osceolachamber@sbcglobal.net	
David	Tucker	Osceola Code Enf.	870-549-2600	David.tucker@osceolalightandpower.com	
Anna	Wadlington	Wilson Gardens	601-201-0228	anna@wilsongardens.com	
Lance	Wilson		870-822-9123	Lanceaustin3@gmail.com	
Sally	Wilson	City of Osceola	870-822-0574	sallylongowilson@yahoo.com	Yes
Leslie	Wolverton	Wilson Gardens	662-418-0560	grow@wilsongardens.com	Yes

Appendix E:

Funding Resources

Local Food Systems Funding Programs – Federal/State

Cities and towns can strengthen their local food systems through a variety of federal projects and programs. The USDA and other federal agencies are committed to supporting local food systems – whether it's by working with producers, engaging with communities, financing local processing and distribution, or helping retailers develop local food connections. Below is a list of just some of the resources available. This information and more can be found on the **USDA's Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food** initiative website at www.usda.gov/knowyourfarmer.

USDA Agricultural Marketing Service

Farmers' Market and Local Food Promotion Program

This new program makes \$30 million available annually to farmers markets, other direct producer-to-consumer venues, and other businesses in the local food supply chain. Funding is evenly split between two components: Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP) for direct consumer-to-producer marketing opportunities, and Local Food Promotion Program (LFPP) for local and regional food business enterprises. Both FMPP and LFPP have a maximum grant of \$100,000, and the LFPP applicants must have 25% matching funds or in-kind donations. By supporting development and marketing activities for farmers markets, food hubs, roadside stands, agri-tourism activities and other producer to consumer markets, the program can help small and mid-sized farmers access markets. For more information, visit <http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSv1.0/FMPP> (FMPP) or <http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSv1.0/LFPP> (LFPP).

Specialty Crop Block Grant Program

The purpose of USDA's Specialty Crop Block Grant Program (SCBGP) is to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops, including locally grown crops. These investments strengthen rural American communities by supporting local and regional markets and improving access to fresh, high quality fruits and vegetables for millions of Americans. These grants also help growers make food safety enhancements, solve research needs, and make better informed decisions to increase profitability and sustainability. Organizations or individuals interested in the SCBGP should contact their state departments of agriculture – which administer the grant program – for more information. The 2014 Farm Bill significantly increased funding for the program. More information is available here:

<http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSv1.0/ams.fetchTemplateData.do?template=TemplateN&rightNav1=SpecialtyCropBlockGrant0Program&topNav=&leftNav=CommodityAreas&page=SCBGP&resultType>.

Organic Cost Share Programs

The 2014 Farm Bill also gave USDA new tools and resources to support the growing \$35 billion organic industry by more than doubling previous support through the organic cost-share programs, making certification more accessible than ever for even the smallest certified producers and handlers. Organic producers and handlers can now apply directly through their State contacts to get reimbursed for up to 75 percent of the costs of organic certification, up to an annual maximum of \$750 per certificate. More information is available at <http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSv1.0/ams.fetchTemplateData.do?template=TemplateQ&leftNav=Na>

[tionalOrganicProgram&page=NOPCostSharing&description=Organic%20Cost%20Share%20Program&acct=nopgeninfo.](#)

Federal State Marketing Improvement Program (FSMIP)

This grant program provides matching funds to state departments of agriculture, state agricultural experiment stations, and other appropriate state agencies to assist in exploring new market opportunities for U.S. food and agricultural products, and to encourage research and innovation aimed at improving the efficiency and performance of the marketing system. FSMIP is designed to support research projects that improve the marketing, transportation, and distribution of U.S. agricultural products. FSMIP is a collaborative effort between Federal and State governments – matching funds go toward projects that bring new opportunities to farmers and ranchers. More information is available at www.ams.usda.gov/fsmip.

USDA Rural Development

Business and Industry Guarantee Loan Program

The purpose of USDA's Business and Industry (B&I) Guaranteed Loan Program is to improve, develop, or finance business, industry, and employment and improve the economic and environmental climate in rural communities. Through this program, USDA provides guarantees on loans made by private lenders to help new and existing businesses gain access to affordable capital by lowering the lender's risk and allowing for more favorable interest rates and terms. A recent change to the program allows projects that are physically located in urban areas if the project benefits underserved communities. The Business and Industry Loan Guarantee program is available on a rolling basis throughout the year. More information is available here: <http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/business-industry-loan-guarantees/>

Value-Added Producer Grants (VAPG)

The primary objective of USDA's Value-Added Producer Grant Program (VAPG) is to help agricultural producers enter into value-added activities related to the processing and/or marketing of bio-based value-added products. VAPG grants are available to producers or producer groups in urban and rural areas. Eligible projects include business plans to market value-added products, evaluating the feasibility of new marketing opportunities, expanding capacity for locally and regionally-grown products, or expanding processing capacity. More information is available here: <http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/value-added-producer-grants>.

Community Facilities Direct Loan and Grant Program

USDA's Community Facilities Direct Loan and Grant program provides infrastructure support in rural communities under 20,000 people. Grants and loans have been used for commercial kitchens, farmers markets, food banks, cold storage facilities, food hubs and other local food infrastructure. Grants are available to public entities such as municipalities, counties, and special-purpose districts, as well as non-profits and tribal governments. Grant funds can be used to construct, enlarge, or improve community facilities and can include the purchase of equipment required for a facility's operation. More information is available here: <http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/community-facilities-direct-loan-grant-program>.

Rural Business Development Grants

This new USDA-RD program essentially combines the former Rural Business Enterprise Grant program (RBEG) and the Rural Business Opportunity Grant program (RBOG). The competitive grant program supports targeted technical assistance, training and other activities leading to the development or expansion of small and emerging private businesses in rural areas. Programmatic activities are separated into enterprise or opportunity type grant activities. Towns, cities, state agencies, and non-profit organizations are among the eligible applicants.

Enterprise type grant funds must be used on projects to benefit small and emerging businesses in rural areas as specified in the grant application. Uses may include:

- Training and technical assistance, such as project planning, business counseling/training, market research, feasibility studies, professional/technical reports, or product/service improvements.
- Acquisition or development of land, easements, or rights of way; construction, conversion, renovation, of buildings, plants, machinery, equipment, access streets and roads, parking areas, utilities.
- Pollution control and abatement.
- Capitalization of revolving loan funds including funds that will make loans for start-ups and working capital.
- Distance adult learning for job training and advancement.
- Rural transportation improvement.
- Community economic development.
- Technology-based economic development.
- Feasibility studies and business plans.
- Leadership and entrepreneur training.
- Rural business incubators.
- Long-term business strategic planning.

Opportunity type grant funding must be used for projects in rural areas and they can be used for:

- Community economic development.
- Technology-based economic development.
- Feasibility studies and business plans.
- Leadership and entrepreneur training.
- Rural business incubators.
- Long-term business strategic planning.

For more information, visit: <http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/rural-business-development-grants>.

USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

EQIP provides cost-share and technical assistance to farmers and ranchers in planning and implementing conservation practices that improve the natural resources (e.g. soil, water, wildlife) on

their agricultural land and forestland. A practice supported through EQIP is the installation of seasonal high tunnels (also known as hoop houses), which are unheated greenhouses that can extend a producer's growing season while conserving resources. In addition, EQIP can help producers transition to organic production or help those growers already certified maintain their certification. More information is available here:

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/financial/eqip/>

USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture

Community Food Projects

Community Food Projects are designed to increase food security in communities by bringing the whole food system together to assess strengths, establish linkages, and create systems that improve the self-reliance of community members over their food needs. Grants are intended to help eligible private nonprofit entities in need of a one-time infusion of federal assistance to establish and carryout multipurpose community food projects. More information is available here: http://www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/cfp/cfp_synopsis.html.

Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive (FINI) Grant Program

The 2014 Farm Bill created this program, which supports projects to increase the purchase of fruits and vegetables among people participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. Applicants may propose small pilot projects (up to \$100,000 for 1 year), multi-year community-based projects (up to \$500,000 for up to 4 years), or larger-scale multi-year projects (more than \$500,000 for up to 4 years). USDA is looking to fund innovative projects that will test community based strategies for how to increase the purchase of fruits and vegetables by SNAP participants through incentives at the point of purchase. USDA will give priority to projects underserved communities and to projects that provide locally- or regionally-produced fruits and vegetables. Applications are due December 15, 2014. More information is available here: <http://nifa.usda.gov/program/food-insecurity-nutrition-incentive-fini-grant-program>.

Beginning Farmers and Ranchers Development Program

This program provides grants to organizations that train, educate, and provide outreach and technical assistance to new and beginning farmers on production, marketing, business management, legal strategies and other topics critical to running a successful operation. The Agriculture Act of 2014 provided an additional \$20 million per year for 2014 through 2018. The reasons for the renewed interest in beginning farmer and rancher programs are: the rising average age of U.S. farmers, the 8% projected decrease in the number of farmers and ranchers between 2008 and 2018, and the growing recognition that new programs are needed to address the needs of the next generation of beginning farmers and ranchers. More information is available here: <http://www.nifa.usda.gov/fo/beginningfarmersandranchers.cfm>.

Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) program

SBIR grants help small businesses conduct high quality research related to important scientific problems and opportunities in agriculture. Research is intended to increase the commercialization of innovations and foster participation by women-owned and socially and economically

disadvantaged small businesses in technological innovation. Grants can be applied towards many areas or research, including projects that manage the movement of products throughout a supply chain, develop processes that save energy, and capture and relay real-time market data. More information is available here: <http://nifa.usda.gov/program/small-business-innovation-research-program>.

Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE)

The mission of the SARE program is to advance sustainable innovations in American agriculture. SARE is uniquely grassroots, administered by four regional offices guided by administrative councils of local experts. Non-profit organizations, researchers, and individuals producers are eligible to apply. More information is available here: <http://www.sare.org/>.

Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI)

AFRI is charged with funding research, education, and extension grants and integrated research, extension, and education grants that address key problems of National, regional, and multi-state importance in sustaining all components of agriculture, including farm efficiency and profitability, ranching, renewable energy, forestry (both urban and agroforestry), aquaculture, rural communities and entrepreneurship, human nutrition, food safety, biotechnology, and conventional breeding. Providing this support requires that AFRI advances fundamental sciences in support of agriculture and coordinates opportunities to build on these discoveries. This will necessitate efforts in education and extension that deliver science-based knowledge to people, allowing them to make informed practical decisions. For more information: <http://www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/afri/afri.html>.

USDA Farm Service Agency

Microloan Program

The Farm Service Agency's (FSA) microloan program is available to agricultural producers in rural and urban areas and provides loans of up to \$35,000 on a rolling basis. Streamlined paperwork and flexible eligibility requirements accommodate new farmers and small farm operations. Larger loans are also available through FSA. Contact your local FSA office and visit <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/farm-loan-programs/microloans/index> for more information.

Farm Storage Facility Loans

These loans finance new construction or refurbishment of farm storage facilities. This includes cold storage and cooling, circulating, and monitoring equipment, which can be particularly important to those growing for local fresh markets. Interested producers should contact their local FSA office and visit

http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/newsReleases?area=newsroom&subject=landing&topic=pfs&newstype=prfactsheet&type=detail&item=pf_20140310_frnln_en_prg.html.

USDA Food and Nutrition Service

Farm to School Grants

Farm to School Grants are available to help schools source more food locally, and to provide complementary educational activities to students that emphasize food, farming, and nutrition. Schools, state and local agencies, tribal organizations, producers and producer groups, and non-profits are eligible to apply. Planning, implementation, and support service grants are available from

\$20,000 to \$100, 000. More information and resources are available at www.fns.usda.gov/farmtoschool/farm-school.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

As of 2014, more than 2,500 farmers' markets nationwide are set up to accept SNAP's electric benefit transfer (EBT) cards. Benefits can be used to purchase many of the foods sold at farmers' markets, including fruits and vegetables, dairy products, breads and cereals, and meat and poultry. They can also purchase seeds and plants which produce food for the household to eat. More information about SNAP benefits at farmers' markets is available from USDA here: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/ebt/learn-about-snap-benefits-farmers-markets>.

WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP)

This program provides coupons for local food purchases to women, infants, and children that are eligible for WIC benefits. The coupons can be used to purchase eligible foods from farmers, farmers' markets, and roadside stands. Only farmers, farmers' markets, and roadside stands authorized by the State agency may accept and redeem FMNP coupons. Individuals who exclusively sell produce grown by someone else such as wholesale distributors, cannot be authorized to participate in the FMNP. For more information, visit: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fmnp/overview>.

Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program

This program, similar to FMNP, awards grants to States, United States Territories, and federally-recognized Indian tribal governments to provide low-income seniors with coupons that can be exchanged for eligible foods (fruits, vegetables, honey, and fresh-cut herbs) at farmers' markets, roadside stands, and community supported agriculture programs. For more information, visit: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sfmnp/overview>.

Funding Programs in Support of Other Livable Community Projects

The programs listed below are popular resources that support a variety of livability projects. The publication "Federal Resources for Sustainable Rural Communities" is a useful guide from the HUD-DOT-EPA Partnerships for Sustainable Communities that describes several additional resources:

- <http://www.sustainablecommunities.gov/partnership-resources/federal-resources-sustainable-rural-communities-guide>

National Endowment for the Arts Our Town Grants

The National Endowment for the Arts' Our Town grant program is the agency's primary creative placemaking grants program. Projects may include arts engagement, cultural planning, and design activities. The grants range from \$25,000 to \$200,000. Our Town invests in creative and innovative projects in which communities, together with their arts and design organizations and artists, seek to:

- Improve their quality of life;
- Encourage greater creative activity;
- Foster stronger community identity and a sense of place; and
- Revitalize economic development.

More information: <http://arts.gov/grants/apply-grant/grants-organizations>

EPA Brownfields Programs

- **Area-wide Planning Pilot Program:** Brownfields Area-Wide Planning is an EPA grant program which provides funding to recipients to conduct research, technical assistance and training that will result in an area-wide plan and implementation strategy for key brownfield sites, which will help inform the assessment, cleanup and reuse of brownfields properties and promote area-wide revitalization. Funding is directed to specific areas, such as a neighborhood, downtown district, local commercial corridor, or city block, affected by a single large or multiple brownfield sites. More information: http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/areawide_grants.htm.
- **Assessment Grants:** Assessment grants provide funding for a grant recipient to inventory, characterize, assess, and conduct planning and community involvement related to brownfields sites. Eligible entities may apply for \$200,000 and up to \$350,000 with a waiver. More information: http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/assessment_grants.htm.
- **Revolving Loan Fund Grants:** Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) grants provide funding for a grant recipient to capitalize a revolving loan fund and to provide subgrants to carry out cleanup activities at brownfield sites. More information is available here: <http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/rlflst.htm>.
- **Cleanup Grants:** Cleanup grants provide funding for a grant recipient to carry out cleanup activities at brownfield sites. An eligible entity may apply for up to \$200,000 per site. More information is available here: http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/cleanup_grants.htm.

Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)

The Federal Highway Administration's TAP provides funding for programs and projects defined as transportation alternatives, including on- and off-road pedestrian and bicycle facilities, infrastructure projects for improving non-driver access to public transportation and enhanced mobility, community improvement activities, and environmental mitigation; recreational trail program projects; safe routes to school projects; and projects for planning, designing, or constructing boulevards and other roadways largely in the right-of-way of former Interstate System routes or other divided highways. In rural areas, these funds are typically allocated by state departments of transportation. For more information, visit: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/map21/guidance/guidetap.cfm>. For more information on Safe Routes to School projects and programs (which are eligible for funding under TAP), visit: http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/safe_routes_to_school/.

Appendix F: References

USDA Know Your Farmer Know Your Food

The **Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food** initiative is a USDA-wide effort to carry out the Department's commitment to strengthening local and regional food systems. The Know Your Farmer Know Your Food website provides a "one stop shop" for resources, from grants and loans to toolkits and guidebooks, from agencies and offices across the Department. The website also contains the Know Your Farmer Know Your Food Compass Map, which shows efforts supported by USDA and other federal partners as well as related information on local and regional food systems.

- <http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/knownyourfarmer?navid=KNOWYOURFARMER>

Farmers' Markets General

USDA National Farmers Market Directory

Provides members of the public with convenient access to information about U.S. farmers' market locations, directions, operating times, product offerings, and accepted forms of payment.

- <http://search.ams.usda.gov/farmersmarkets/>

USDA's "National Farmers Market Manager Survey"

Nearly 1,300 farmers' market managers responded to this national survey conducted in 2006.

- <http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/getfile?dDocName=STELPRDC5077203&acct=wdmgeninfo>

USDA's "Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) at Farmers Markets: A How-To Handbook"

This 2010 report from USDA describes how farmers' markets can accept SNAP benefits. SNAP is the federal government's nutritional assistance program. It was formerly known as food stamps.

- <http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/getfile?dDocName=STELPRDC5085298&acct=wdmgeninfo>

Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project's "Sharing the Harvest: A Guide to Bridging the Divide between Farmers Markets and Low-Income Shoppers."

This 2012 report from ASAP describes strategies for bridging the divide between farmers' markets and low income shoppers.

- <http://asapconnections.org/local-food-research-center/reports/>

USDA's "Connecting Local Farmers with USDA Farmers Market Nutrition Program Participants"

This 2010 report from USDA describes how providing transportation can help low-income individuals overcome barriers to accessing farmers markets.

- <http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/farmersmarkets>

Farmers' Markets Management

Oregon State University's "Understanding the Link Between Farmers' Market Size and Management Organization."

This report, supported by the USDA, explored internal management issues of farmers' markets and describes tools that can help make farmers' markets sustainable.

- <http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/getfile?dDocName=STELPRDC5071342>

Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project's "25 Best Practices for Farmers' Markets."

This report describes 25 best practices in the areas of management, regulations, risk management, food safety, improving vendor sales, and marketing/outreach/promotion/social media.

- <http://asapconnections.org/tools-for-farmers/hosting-a-farmers-market/farmers-market-makeover/>

Food Hubs

USDA's "Moving Food Along the Value Chain: Innovations in Regional Food Distribution"

This 2012 report from USDA examined eight case studies of food value chains and provides some practical lessons about the challenges they face and lessons learned.

<http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/ams.fetchTemplateData.do?template=TemplateA&navID=WholesaleandFarmersMarkets&leftNav=WholesaleandFarmersMarkets&page=FoodHubResearchReleasesBlogs&description=Food%20Hub%20Research,%20Releases,%20Blog%20Posts,%20and%20Articles>

USDA's "Regional Food Hub Resource Guide"

USDA released this primer on food hubs and the resources available to support them in 2012.

- <http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/getfile?dDocName=STELPRDC5097957>

Michigan State University's and Wallace Center's "State of the Food Hub – 2013 National Survey Results"

This survey of more than 100 food hubs across the United States quantifies the scope, scale, and impacts of local food hubs.

- <http://www.wallacecenter.org/resourcelibrary/state-of-the-food-hub-2013-national-survey-results>

Wholesome Wave's "Food Hub Business Assessment Toolkit"

The toolkit provides tools to assess a food hub businesses' readiness for investment.

- <http://www.wholesomewave.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/HFCI-Food-Hub-Business-Assessment-Toolkit.pdf>

Community Kitchens

Culinary Incubator's Community Kitchen Database

This site provides a description and interactive map of community kitchens across the United States.

- <http://www.culinaryincubator.com/maps.php>

Community Gardens

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Community Gardens Website

- <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyplaces/healthtopics/healthyfood/community.htm>

Vermont Community Garden Network's Garden Organizer Toolkit

- <http://vcgn.org/garden-organizer-toolkit/>

Farm to School

USDA's Farm to School Website

USDA provides information on its website about Farm to School programs and how to get one started in your community.

- <http://www.fns.usda.gov/farmentoschool/implementing-farm-school-activities>
- <http://www.fns.usda.gov/farmentoschool/farm-school>

Land Use

American Planning Association's (APA's) "Zoning for Urban Agriculture"

The APA in 2010 prepared an article on urban agriculture zoning in its March 2010 *Zoning Practice*.

- <https://www.planning.org/zoningpractice/2010/pdf/mar.pdf>

American Planning Association's (APA's) "Zoning for Public Markets and Street Vendors"

The APA also prepared an article on zoning for public markets in its February 2009 *Zoning Practice*.

- <https://www.planning.org/zoningpractice/2010/pdf/mar.pdf>

Other

CDC's Report "Recommended Community Strategies and Measurements to Prevent Obesity in the United States"

Report documenting strategies to implement for obesity prevention.

<http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/resources/recommendations.html>

Food Value Chains: Creating Shared Value to Enhance Marketing Success

The report provides an overview of how food value chains are initiated, structured, how they function and the business advantages and challenges of this approach.

- <http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSv1.0/ams.fetchTemplateData.do?template=TemplateA&navID=FoodValueChainsPageWholesaleAndFarmersMarkets&rightNav1=FoodValueChainsPageWholesaleAndFarmersMarkets&topNav=&leftNav=WholesaleandFarmersMarkets&page=FoodValueChains&resultType=&acct=wdmgeninfo>

Wholesale Markets and Facility Design

Provides technical assistance and support to customers regarding the construction of new structures or the remodeling of existing ones. These facilities include wholesale market, farmers markets, public markets, and food hubs.

- <http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSv1.0/ams.fetchTemplateData.do?template=TemplateN&navID=WholesaleandFarmersMarkets&leftNav=WholesaleandFarmersMarkets&page=WFMWholesaleMarketsandFacilityDesign&description=Wholesale%20Markets%20and%20Facility%20Design&acct=facdsn>

Organic Agriculture

USDA is committed to helping organic agriculture grow and thrive. This is a one-stop shop with information about organic certification and USDA-wide support for organic agriculture.

- www.usda.gov/organic

Fruit and Vegetable Audits

Audits for Good Agricultural Practices and Good Handling Practices can help producers access commercial markets by verifying that fruits and vegetables are produced, packed, handled, and stored in the safest manner possible to minimize risks of microbial food safety hazards.

- <http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSv1.0/ams.fetchTemplateData.do?template=TemplateN&page=GAPGHPAuditVerificationProgram>

USDA Certification for Small and Very Small Producers of Grass-fed Beef and Lamb

Allows small and very small-scale producers to certify that their animals meet the requirements of the grass-fed marketing claim standard, helping them differentiate themselves and communicate value to their customers.

- <http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSv1.0/GrassFedSVS>

Local and Regional Market News

Provides reports on local and regional food outlets, providing producers and consumers with instant access to prices from farmers markets, farmers' auctions, food hubs, and direct-to-consumer sales, providing support to even the smallest farmers and producers.

- <http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSv1.0/MarketNewsLocalRegional>

Arkansas-Specific Resources

University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service’s “Arkansas Community Gardens”

A webpage with information about starting community gardens in Arkansas.

- <http://www.uaex.edu/yard-garden/vegetables/community-gardens.aspx>

University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service’s SNAP-ED Program

A webpage with information about SNAP-ED in Arkansas.

- <http://www.uaex.edu/health-living/food-nutrition/eating-well/snap-ed.aspx>

Arkansas Farmers Market Directory

A webpage with information about SNAP-ED in Arkansas.

- <http://www.arkansas.com/dining/farmers-markets/>

Arkansas Department of Health’s and Arkansas Agriculture Department’s “Farmers’ Market Vendor Guide”

- <http://www.healthy.arkansas.gov/programsServices/environmentalHealth/foodProtection/Documents/FarmersMarketGuidelines.pdf>

Appendix G:

Presentation Slides



Local Foods, Local Places

Osceola, Arkansas
March 17-18, 2015

*A Program of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Transportation,
Appalachian Regional Commission, Delta Regional Authority, and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*

Workshop Agenda

- Day 1
 - Community Tour
 - **Work Session 1 (Where do we want to go?)**
- Day 2
 - Work Session 2 (What needs to happen?)
 - Work Session 3 (How are we going to make it happen?)

Workshop Supports The Following Goals...

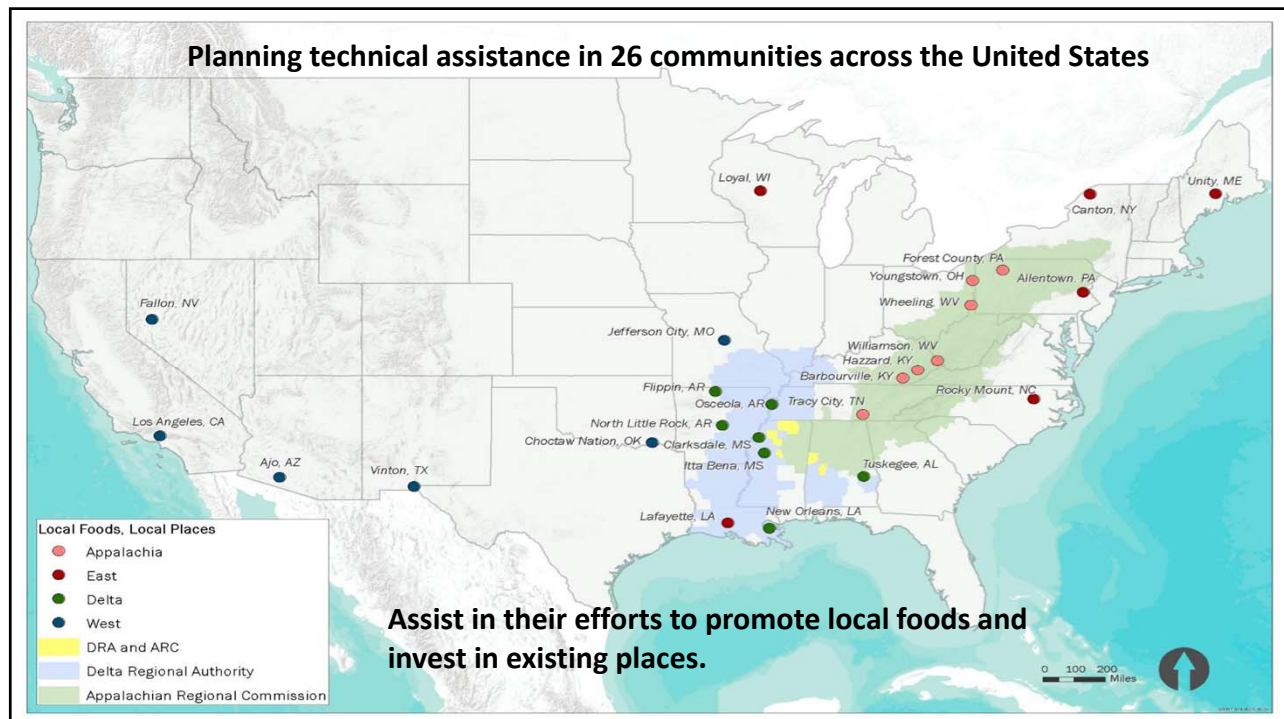
- A downtown farmers market
- More farmers that grow food
- Community gardens in neighborhoods
- A community kitchen/food business incubator
- Farm-to-table dining options

Presentation Outline

- Background
- Success Stories
- The Case for Investing in Local Foods
- Your Community
- Your Local Food System

Program Background

- A joint project of:
 - U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
 - U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)
 - Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC)
 - Delta Regional Authority (DRA)
 - U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT)
 - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
- With participation from:
 - U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
 - State, regional and local agencies and organizations
 - Educational institutions



Program Purpose

- Desired outcomes

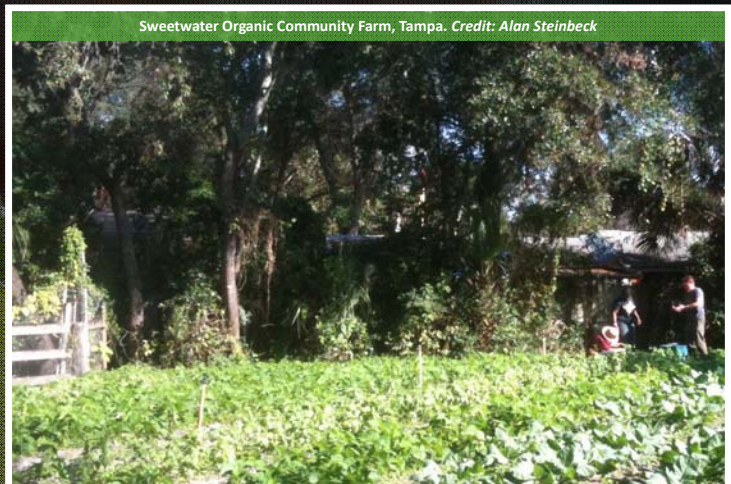
- More economic opportunities for local farmers and businesses
- Better access to healthy local food, especially among disadvantaged groups
- Revitalized downtowns, Main Streets, and existing neighborhoods

- End product

- New connections among people to build capacity for success
- An action plan with goals and strategies for achieving these outcomes

More economic opportunities for local farmers and businesses.

- Local Production



Sweetwater Organic Community Farm, Tampa. Credit: Alan Steinbeck

More economic opportunities for local farmers and businesses.

- Local Production
- Local Farmers Markets



Carrots at New York Market. Credit: Jason Espie

More economic opportunities for local farmers and businesses.

- Local Production
- Local Farmers Markets
- Food Entrepreneurs
- Other Local Business Growth



Pickle Man. Credit: Jason Espie

Better access to healthy local food, especially among disadvantaged groups.

- Innovative Markets



Mobile Fresh Market. Credit: Alan Steinbeck

Better access to healthy local food, especially among disadvantaged groups.

- Innovative Markets

- Healthy Foods Education

- Production
- Preparation
- Consumption



School Children in the Garden. Credit: National Gardening Association

Better access to healthy local food, especially among disadvantaged groups.

- Innovative Markets
- Healthy Foods Education
 - Production
 - Preparation
 - Consumption
- Healthy Neighborhood Initiatives



Walkable Neighborhood Syracuse, NY Credit: Alan Steinbeck

Revitalized downtowns, Main Streets, and existing neighborhoods.

- Bring People Downtown



Sarasota Saturday Market. Credit: Renaissance Planning Group

Revitalized downtowns,
Main Streets, and
existing neighborhoods.

- Bring People Downtown
- Local Foods in Local Restaurants



In Town Restaurant Serving Locally Sourced Food and Drink, Durham. Credit: Alan Steinbeck

Revitalized downtowns,
Main Streets, and
existing neighborhoods.

- Bring People Downtown
- Local Foods in Local Restaurants
- Neighborhood Action



U.S. EPA Building Blocks Program in Salina, KS. Credit: Renaissance Planning Group

Revitalized downtowns,
Main Streets, and
existing neighborhoods.

- Bring People Downtown
- Local Foods in Local Restaurants
- Neighborhood Action
- Invest in Existing Communities



Stories from the Road



Access to healthy, local food



Williamson, West Virginia Community Garden

Image Credit: Renaissance Planning Group

Access to healthy, local food



Watauga County, North Carolina Farmers Market

Image Credit: Jen Walker

Access to healthy, local food



Huntington, West Virginia. Wild Ramp Market

Image Credit: Renaissance Planning Group

Economic Opportunities



Duffield, Virginia. Appalachian Harvest Food Hub

Image Credit: Appalachian Sustainable Development

Economic Opportunities



Kentucky Farmer in High Tunnel

Image Credit: Renaissance Planning Group

Revitalize Downtown, Main Street, Neighborhoods



Pikeville, Tennessee. Streetscape Overhaul and Downtown Farmers Market

Image Credit: Renaissance Planning Group

Revitalize Downtown, Main Street, Neighborhoods



Local Food System

Definitions and Trends



Global Food System



Berry Farm. Credit: Glenn Nelson, Flickr



Distribution. Credit: Stu Mayhew, Flickr



Refrigerated Truck. Credit: TruckPR, Flickr



Container train. Credit: Jaxport, Flickr



Cargo plane. Credit: Helmut Guigo, Flickr

One Definition of Local Foods

- Food produced, processed, and distributed within a particular geographic boundary that consumers associate with their own community.

Source: USDA ERS. *Local Food Systems: Concepts, Impacts, and Issues*. May 2010.

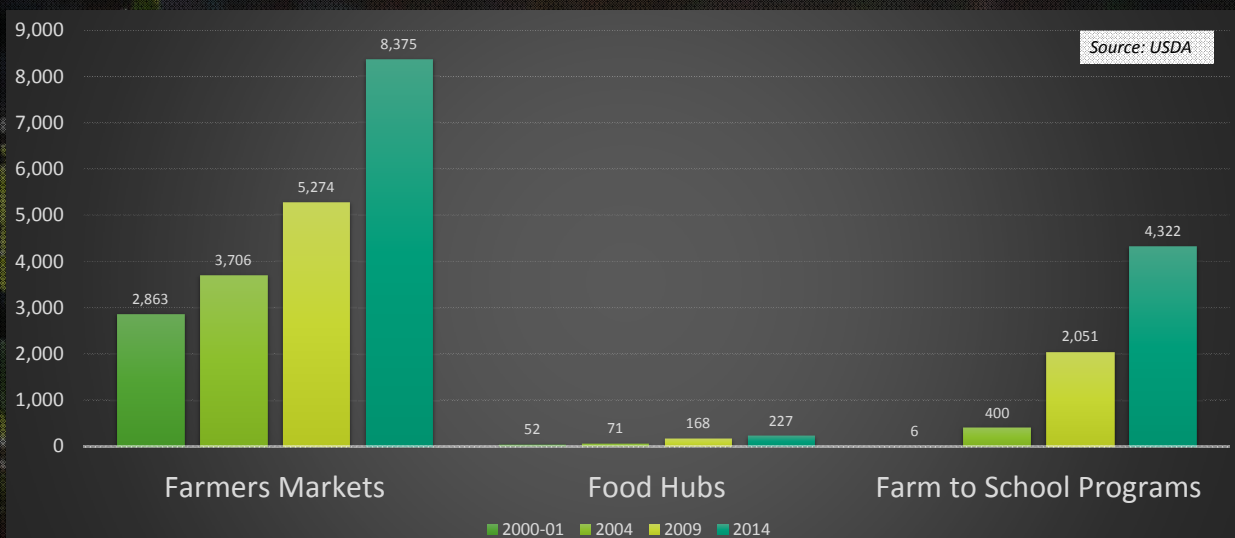


Local Food System



Credit: USDA

Local Food Systems are Growing Rapidly



Diners Want Local Options Top Restaurant Trends for 2015

#1

- Locally sourced meats and seafood

#2

- Locally grown produce

#3

- Environmental sustainability

#4

- Healthful kids' meals

#5

- Natural ingredients/minimally processed food

Source: National Restaurant Association. "2015 Culinary Forecast." 2014

Grocery Shoppers Want Local Options

66%

- Believe local foods help local economies

60%

- Believe local foods deliver a better and broader assortment of products

45%

- Believe local foods provide healthier alternatives

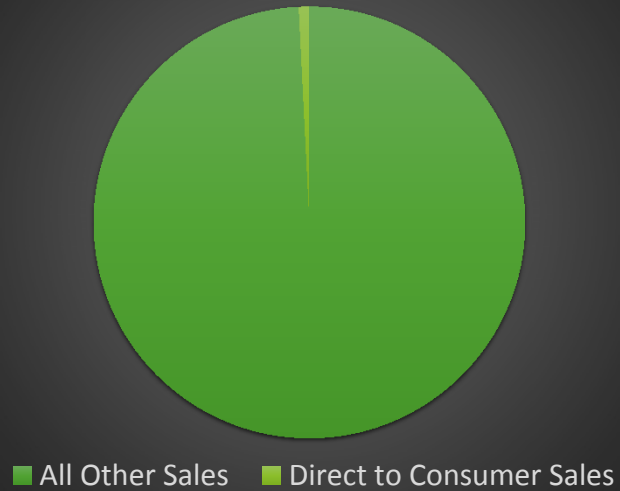
Source: AT Kearney. "Buying into the Local Food Movement." 2013

Room to Grow

Direct to consumer sales are growing faster than all agricultural sales

- \$551 million in 1997
- \$1.2 billion in 2007
- \$1.3 billion in 2012
- But account for only 0.8% of U.S. ag sales in 2007 (edible products)

U.S. Agricultural Sales 2007
(Edible Products Only)



Advancing Local Foods

Popular Strategies



Community
Gardens



Farmers
Markets



Incubator
Kitchens

Popular Strategies



Farm to School
Programs



Local Food
Hubs

Federal Funding for Local Foods is Up

Producers

- Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program
- Specialty Crop Block Grant Program

Process/Aggregate/Distribute

- Community Food Projects Grant Program
- Rural Business Enterprise Grants
- Value Added Producer Grants

Venues

- Farmers Markets and Local Food Promotion Program
- Community Facilities Grants

Eaters

- Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive Program
- Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program
- Farm to School Grants

Why the Growing Interest in Local Foods and Local Places?

Health Concerns

- Adolescent Obesity Quadrupled from 1980 to 2012 (5% to 21%)
- 35% of US Adult Obese
- Medical cost of obesity = \$147 Billion in 2008
- Nutrition is a key factor
- Physical activity a factor
 - Need for safe places to walk, bike, recreate



Image Credit: Time Magazine.

Environmental Concerns

- Greenhouse gas emissions
 - U.S. food system accounts for 16% of energy use
- Use of chemicals, pesticides, and energy-based fertilizers in farming
- Loss of farmland to development



Applying Pesticides to Corn. Image Credit: Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

Economic Concerns

- Decline of traditional downtowns and Main Street districts
- Loss of local businesses that make local places unique
- Leakage of local dollars to national retailers
- Slow job growth and stagnant wages



Downtown Forest City, NC. Image Credit: Renaissance Planning Group.

Benefits

- Better access to supermarkets corresponds to healthier eating:
- For every additional supermarket in a census tract, produce consumption increases 32 percent for African Americans and 11 percent for whites



Image Credit: www.drjudynd.com

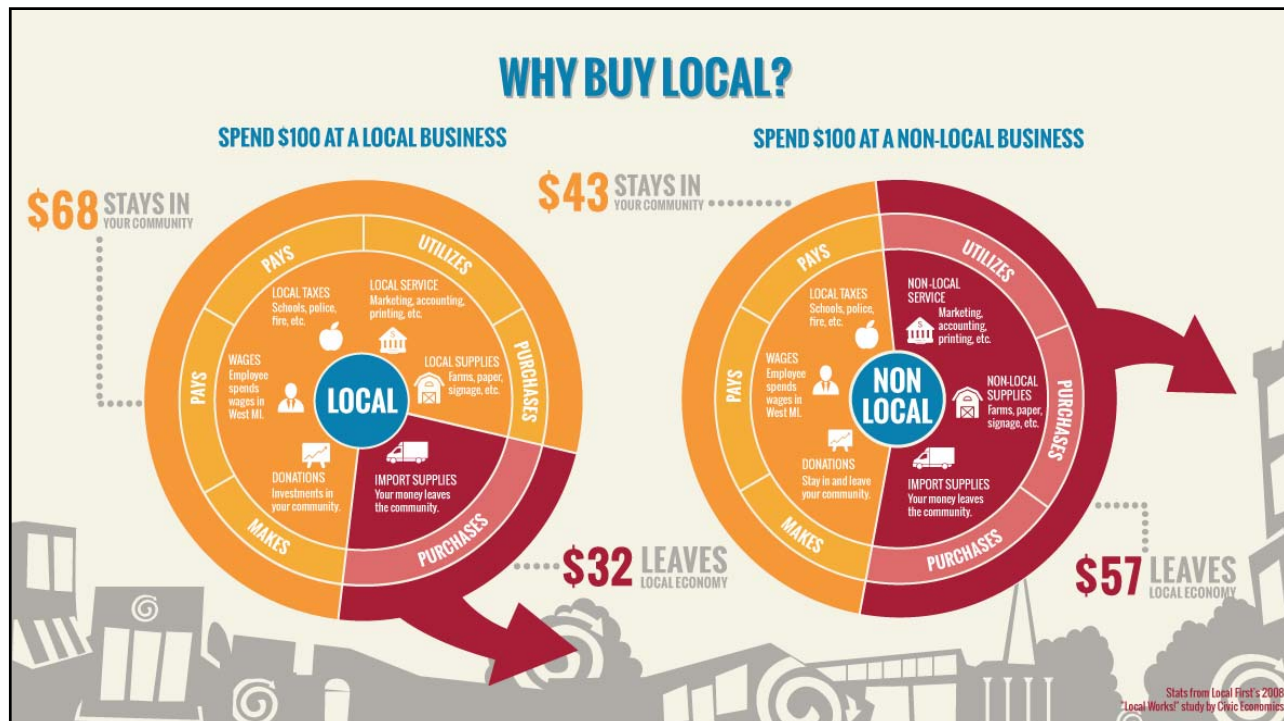
Source: PolicyLink and the Food Trust, "The Grocery Gap"

Benefits

- Placing local food venues downtown and in existing neighborhoods helps businesses
- New Albany, Mississippi's downtown merchants reported a 25% increase in sales during the 2nd Saturday of each month (when the farmers market expands to include music & art)



Downtown New Albany, MS. Image Credit: Renaissance Planning Group.



Benefits

- Investing in places like existing main streets, neighborhoods and downtowns can support environmental, economic and public health goals
 - Creating vibrant walkable centers
 - Encouraging mixtures of uses, transportation and housing choices
 - Revitalizing existing centers and reducing pressure to develop in greenfield locations



Your Community



Economic Concerns in Osceola

Economic Measures	Osceola	Arkansas
Median Household Income	\$33,125	\$40,768
Persons Below Poverty Level	33.9%	19.2%

- 48% of families with children under 18 live below the poverty level

Local Demand: What Do We Spend on Food?

Category	Annual Expenditures
All Food	\$14 million
Meats, Poultry, Fish, and Eggs	\$2 million
Fruits and Vegetables	\$1.6 million

Source: ESRI Business Analyst

Health Concerns in Osceola

Health Indicator	Mississippi County	Relative to 56 Peer Counties
Adults with Diabetes	10.2%	On Par
Adults Obesity	44%	Worse
Adults Reporting No Exercise in Last Month	42%	Worse
People that are Low Income and do not Live Near a Grocery Store	6.9%	On Par

Source: CDC Community Health Status Indicators 2015

Your Local Food System

Local Supply: Producers in Mississippi County

Category	2012 Totals
Total Farms	369
Vegetable Farms	6
Fruit, Tree Nut, and Berry Farms	2
Total Agriculture Sales	\$315 million
Direct to Consumer Sales (such as via farmers market)	\$51,000

Source: 2012 Census of Agriculture

Cotton accounts for about \$115 million
Direct to consumer sales nearly doubled from 2007-2012



Local Foods and Livability: *Making the Connection*

- Preserves Viable Working and Natural Lands
- Improves Public Health
- Supports Vibrant Town Centers
- Increases Economic Opportunities
- Supports Local Jobs and Keeps Dollars Local
- Contributes to Regional and Cultural Identity
- Increases Local and Regional Connections and Activity

Festival in Lafayette, LA (left); Farmer, Lafayette, LA (right). Credit: Denny Culbert - <http://www.dennyculbert.com/>





Issues & Opportunities in Osceola

What We've Heard – Osceola

Pros

- Energy
- New industries
- Developer interest in events center
- Planning for the Future
 - ReNEW Arkansas
 - City and County Plans
 - Mid-South Regional Food Cluster Initiative

Cons

- Human resources in short supply
- Most farming is commodities
- Public health
- Unemployment
- Properties in disrepair

This I Believe...

- About our community
 - (I believe Osceola _____)
- About our downtown
 - (I believe our downtown _____)
- About local foods
 - (I believe local foods _____)

Our Food, Our Future Storytelling

- Divide into groups (ideally with people you don't know).
- Create a news story about an event 20 years from now. Something good has just happened in our town.
 - What happened?
 - Why is it important?
- Develop a headline that captures the story's essence and write it on an index card.
- Report to the entire group on your story and what it means about your aspirations for the future.

Workshop Agenda

- Day 1
 - Community Tour
 - Work Session 1 (Where do we want to go?)
- Day 2
 - Work Session 2 (What needs to happen?)
 - Work Session 3 (How are we going to make it happen?)

Draft Goals

1. Coordinate and enhance healthy foods education, with an emphasis on youth
2. Increase the amount of food grown in our community
3. Select a location and design for downtown farmers market
4. Determine how to operate, manage, and fund the farmers market
5. Identify focus areas and improve infrastructure so that downtown thrives again



Background

2007

- UK Agricultural Extension helps launch market
- 1 location with 4 vendors.
- Runs for 2 months (June/July)

2008

- Vendors increase to 7.
- Extension receives a \$3,500 grant for Old Time Music events.
- Expand to a 3-month season (August).

2009

- Vendors increase to 15.
- Begin education workshops with vendors.
- Extension approves \$110K for permanent market structure.

Background

2010

- Open under new pavilion with restrooms and ADA access.
- Season expands again (June – September).
- 18 vendors, including value-added producers and artisans for 1st time.

2011

- Season expands again (May – October).
- 28 vendors.
- Add a senior voucher program, sales reach \$15,000
- Expand vendor education with marketing and booth design workshops.

2012

- Add a mid-week market in downtown Williamsburg (July/August only).
- Sales reach \$23,000.
- Start charging \$2 per day vendor fee.

Background

2013

- Become a non-profit Whitley County Farmers' Market Inc.
- Add third venue in downtown Corbin.
- 33 vendors. Average 12 per market.
- \$35/season vendor fee.

2014

- Hired part-time market manager
- Acquired an EBT machine for food stamps

Organization

- Initially housed under the UK Cooperative Extension
- After 5 years, Extension encourages Market to become independent
- Kentucky Center for Agriculture & Rural Development (KCARD) helps board create Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, & Regulations



Organization

- Filed Articles of Incorporation with Kentucky Secretary of State in March 2013
- Organized as a Not for Profit Cooperative
- Opened back account at local community bank with \$312 from gate fees



Rules

- Market is open to all farmers in Whitley County and any bordering county
 - 7 counties total
- Open to value-added producers and artisans
- Allow sale of prepared foods



Credit: WCFM

Funding

- UK Cooperative Extension
- City of Corbin
- Corbin Tourism
- Williamsburg Tourism
- Community Farm Alliance
- Governor's Office of Agricultural Policy
- State of Kentucky

Accomplishments

- Selected as one of five Kentucky markets to participate in Community Farm Alliance Farmers' Market Training Program
- Selected as the State Farmers' Market of the Year – Small Market Category



Credit: WCFM

Burgaw Incubator Kitchen

Burgaw, NC

Background

- Burgaw is a town of 4,000 in rural SE North Carolina
- Region looking to diversify economy, partially in response to concerns about the long-term viability of tobacco
- Strong and diverse agricultural region with potential for more value-added products



Credit: City of Burgaw

Operations

- Permitted by Pender County and NC Department of Agriculture
- Managed by Town's Planning Department
- Use a renovated rail depot downtown
- Charge users between \$10 and \$20/hour
- Equipment includes gas range with 10 burners, 2 ovens, 3 grills, 2 fridges, 2 freezers, food processor, mixer, ice maker

Operations

- First success story is Custom Fit Meals
 - Provide healthy meals to members at Cross Fit gyms in the region (compared to Jenny Craig for CrossFit)
 - Expanded to other East Coast regions
 - Moved into larger facilities after 2 years in the Burgaw Incubator Kitchen
- Also serves bakers & caterers



Credit: City of Burgaw

Photos



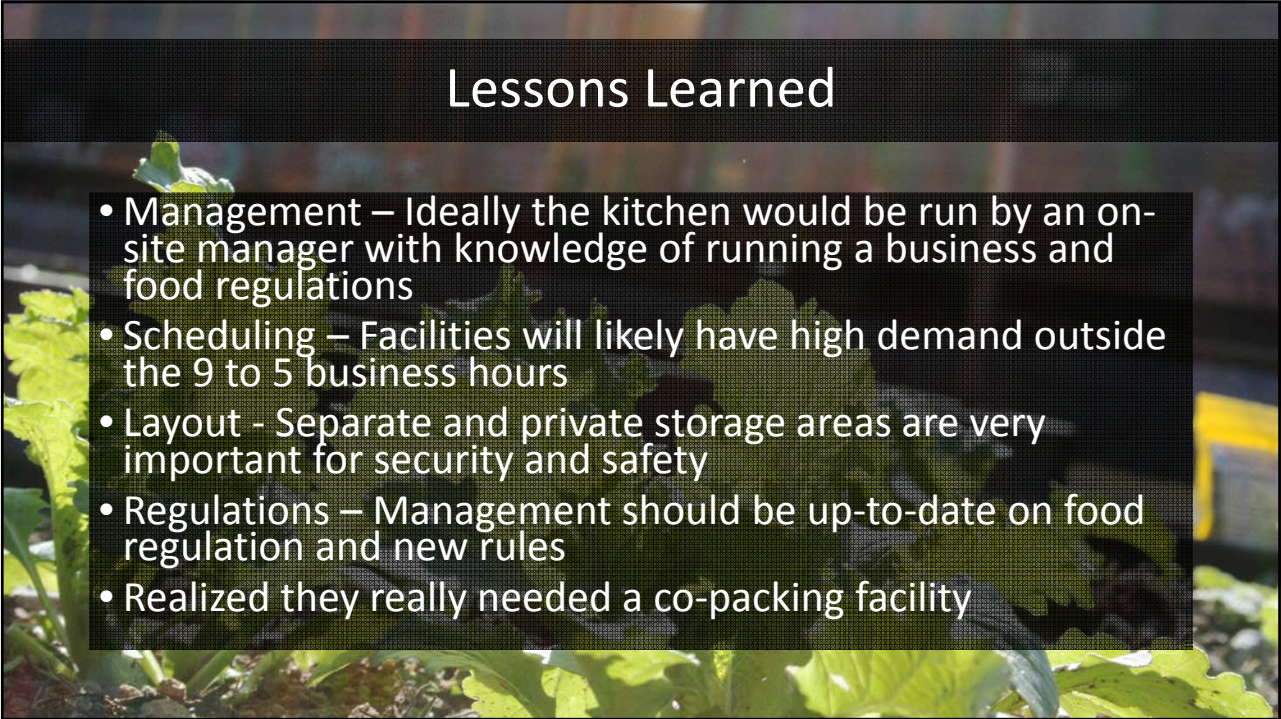
Credit: Jen Walker

Challenges

- Management:
 - Original plan was Community College
 - Then a contractor was hired by town
 - Then a local foods hub (Feast Down East)
 - Finally the town's planning department
- Management needs knowledge in food business and regulation; these are areas in which most tenants struggle

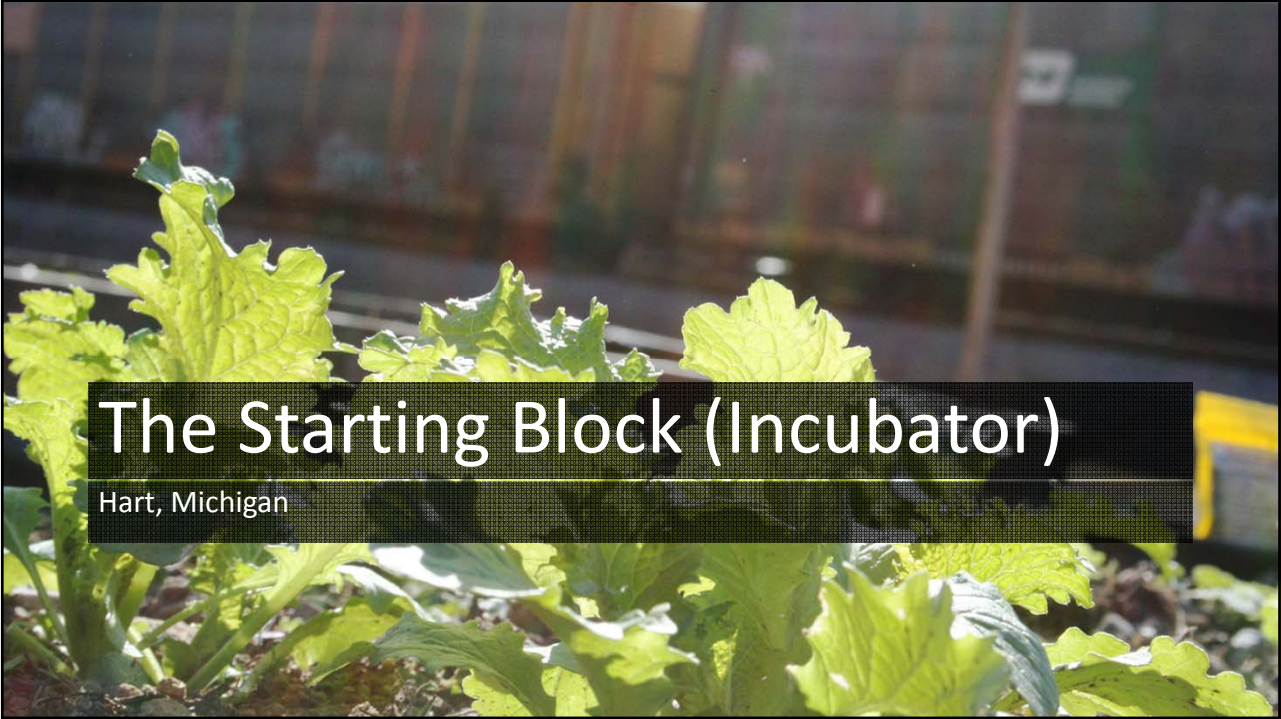
Challenges

- Low interest by local farmers – They were a key initial target for the incubator kitchen
 - Agriculture and food business are very different and both time intensive
 - Farmers express more interest in co-packing facilities that can process and add value to their produce with less demand on their time and resources



Lessons Learned

- Management – Ideally the kitchen would be run by an on-site manager with knowledge of running a business and food regulations
- Scheduling – Facilities will likely have high demand outside the 9 to 5 business hours
- Layout - Separate and private storage areas are very important for security and safety
- Regulations – Management should be up-to-date on food regulation and new rules
- Realized they really needed a co-packing facility



The Starting Block (Incubator)

Hart, Michigan

- Started to organize in 2002
- Incorporated as a non-profit in 2005
- Primary stakeholders include:
 - Michigan Department of Agriculture
 - Michigan Economic Development Corp.
 - Michigan Food and Farming Systems
 - Michigan State Univ. Product Center
- Initiated with a \$238,700 grant (USDA RD) and \$40k from the MEDC
- Facility is ~11,000 sq ft, with half used for offices and classrooms, and half for kitchens and storage



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Background

- Williamson is a town of 3,000 in rural southern WV
- Region looking to diversify economy in response to job loss in the coal industry and related service jobs
- Sustainable Williamson leading several initiatives, including the gardens



Credit: Renaissance Planning

Details

- 30 raised beds and 3 high tunnels
- Gardens are on city-owned property provided by mayor
- Next to Williamson Towers, a low income housing development
- Many gardeners elderly or disabled
- Farmers' market sells produce from the gardens and proceeds go back into covering garden costs

Management

- Collaboration of the City, Williamson Redevelopment Authority, Central Appalachian Sustainable Economies, West Virginia University Extension, and the Wildwood Garden Club
- Took 3 to 5 years from idea to implementation
- Beds rent for \$5, \$10, or \$20 per year based on size



Credit: Renaissance Planning

Timeline

2011

- **Community Garden Plan**

2012

- **Site Design**
 - \$2,850 from WV Community Development Hub (non profit)
- **Construct High Tunnels and Beds**
 - \$1,000 from USDA Special Crop Block Grant program & donations

2013

- **Agricultural Workshop Series**
- **Construct Additional Beds**

Photos



Credit: Renaissance Planning

Mapping Opportunities - Region

Group A: Who are the Producers, Where are the Markets

Using the two maps provided for the town scale and regional scale take a moment to orient yourselves then place dots down for the following:

- Green dots - **food producing farms** (existing or emergent)
- Gold stars - identify **existing farmers markets**. If there is a potential for a new farmers market that does not exist, circle that stars
- Questions for discussion: What do farms produce? Do they already sell at an existing farmers market? What are existing market times (important to know to avoid duplication) Take notes.

Mapping Opportunities - Downtown

Group B: Downtown focus

As a group review the map and get oriented. Does anyone know the boundary of the arts and historic district? Attempt to outline it in purple. The remainder of this exercise should be to identify:

- **Possible Farmers Market sites.** Green dots - potential sites for farmers markets. These should be numbered and labeled with someone taking notes on a flip chart so we can discuss them provide pros and cons for each. Consider the location, is it a nice area, is it convenient, is there parking.
- **Community Garden locations.** Using red marker, circle lots that could be potential community garden sites. Number these too so they can be detailed with more information. Consider the feasibility of each location, the pros and cons. Who might run or manage that location. Who is the owner and what condition of this property. Is it a strong candidate for a garden?
- **Target priority properties.** Gold stars - identify properties that need attention, reinvestment. Don't identify all and every vacant lot, just where you want to focus attention.

Farmers Market Considerations

1. How will the market be managed?
2. Who are your customers?
3. Where will it be located?
4. Who will lead on farmer recruitment?
5. Will you accept SNAP?
6. What are the rules?
 - Where can food come from, % crafts/food, growing methods, etc.
7. How will it be operated (convenience is key)

Action Planning Exercise

- Assign each action to a goal area
- Turn the idea into SMART action language
- For each action, describe:
 - Time frame
 - Lead role and supporting cast
 - Cost estimate and funding sources
- **100-Day Challenge:** What can be done by July to keep the momentum going?