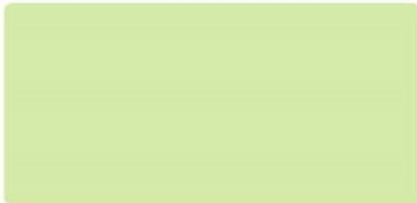
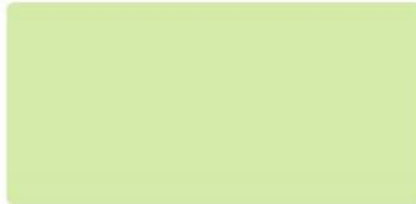




# LOCAL FOODS, LOCAL PLACES

## Technical Assistance Program



## Local Foods, Local Places Community Action Plan for Alamosa, Colorado

December 2017



For more information about Local Foods, Local Places visit:

<https://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/local-foods-local-places>

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## Community Story

Alamosa, Colorado is the largest, full-service city in the San Luis Valley. Known as the “Gateway to the Great Sand Dunes,” it was incorporated in 1878. Alamosa seemingly grew overnight and was once a rail center for the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad. Today, residents and visitors enjoy an abundance of recreational opportunities with the Rio Grande River, Great Sand Dunes National Park, golf courses, and hiking trails in the area.

Located in south central Colorado, the city is nestled in the heart of the San Luis Valley. Geographically located between the Sangre de Cristo and San Juan mountain ranges, the valley extends 125 miles long, is 65 miles wide, and has an altitude of over 7,000 feet.<sup>1</sup> The Rio Grande is the lifeblood of one of Colorado’s most important agricultural regions. Alamosa is a regional food producer, exporter, and food hub. The city also has several grocery stores. However, much of Alamosa is deemed a United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) food desert due to the local high poverty rate and little or no vehicular access or public transit.<sup>2</sup>

Another challenge the city faces is the revitalization of downtown Alamosa. Many business ventures close in a short amount of time due to inadequate initial funding or the lack of a strong business plan that ensures the new operation’s success. With an enhanced downtown area with improved walkability, upgraded safety and accessibility features, enhanced arts and culture, and local foods, Alamosa has potential to become a vibrant destination for residents and tourists alike.

Demographics of Alamosa today reflect the deep-seeded roots of early Spanish settlers as 50 percent of the city’s 8,780 residents are Hispanic/Latino.<sup>2</sup> The rate of adult obesity is 21 percent in Alamosa County, similar to the Colorado average



Figure 1 – The Rio Grande River in Alamosa. Image Credit: Renaissance Planning



Figure 2 – Individuals on the Local Foods, Local Places community tour learn about challenges and opportunities facing downtown businesses in Alamosa. Image Credit: Renaissance Planning



Figure 3 – The Rio Grande Farm Park in Alamosa. Image Credit: Renaissance Planning

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.southern-colorado-guide.com/sanluisvalley.html>

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Census, Factfinder, Query for Alamosa City, Colorado, 2010 Census population. [https://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/cf/1.0/en/place/Alamosa%20city,%20Colorado/POPULATION/DECENNIAL\\_CNT](https://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/cf/1.0/en/place/Alamosa%20city,%20Colorado/POPULATION/DECENNIAL_CNT)



(20 percent), with 86 percent of adults ages 65-75 undergoing diabetic monitoring.<sup>3</sup> These statistics can be attributed to persistent poverty as the unemployment rate of Alamosa County is 10.4 percent, leaving 29 percent of the county population, 46 percent of family households with children under the age of five years old, and 100 percent of single mother households with children under the age of five, all below the poverty level.<sup>4</sup> It is for this reason the area was a target for the USDA StrikeForce initiative that aims to address specific challenges associated with rural poverty.<sup>5</sup> In 2014, the rate of food insecurity in Alamosa County was 14 percent (approximately 2,260 individuals) compared to the state average of 13 percent.<sup>6</sup>

The Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade created a bottom-up approach to economic development, citing six core objectives to enhance the San Luis Valley region. Currently, agriculture drives the valley, including Alamosa, and accounts for nearly a third of the area's economic activity. Other top industries in the area include health and wellness, transportation and logistics, tourism and outdoor recreation, and financial services. The largest employers in the region include San Luis Valley Health, Rio Grande Hospital, Mountain King, Monte Vista Cooperative, and Idaho Pacific Corporation.<sup>7</sup>

Many organizations and agencies in Alamosa are responding to the economic conditions and food security concerns facing many residents by increasing access to fresh, healthy food; strengthening the community's sense of place; and enhancing the downtown area to promote local arts and entertainment, business, historic preservation, tourism, and local foods.



Figure 4 – An ARTscape installation, Alamosa. Image Credit: Renaissance Planning



Figure 5 – The Boyd Community Garden in Alamosa. Image Credit: Renaissance Planning

<sup>3</sup> County Health Rankings and Roadmaps. <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/colorado/2014/rankings/alamosa/county/outcomes/overall/snapshot>

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Census, Factfinder, Query for Alamosa City, Colorado, demographic profile, 2015 American Community Survey. [https://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/ACS/15\\_5YR/DP05/1600000US0801090](https://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/ACS/15_5YR/DP05/1600000US0801090)

<sup>5</sup> USDA StrikeForce. <https://nifa.usda.gov/topic/strikeforce>

<sup>6</sup> Feeding America, Map the Meal Gap data portal. [http://www.feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america/our-research/map-the-meal-gap/2014/CO\\_AllCounties\\_CDs\\_MMG\\_2014.pdf](http://www.feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america/our-research/map-the-meal-gap/2014/CO_AllCounties_CDs_MMG_2014.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade. Region 8 Bottom Up Blueprint Business Plan Summary Report profile. 2013. [http://choosecolorado.com/sites/default/files/Assets/RegionalPartners/Documents/2013\\_Summaries/CO-BP-Region-8-summary-profile.pdf](http://choosecolorado.com/sites/default/files/Assets/RegionalPartners/Documents/2013_Summaries/CO-BP-Region-8-summary-profile.pdf)

In 2016, Alamosa requested assistance through the Local Foods, Local Places program to develop an action plan for promoting local food systems and healthy, walkable, economically vibrant communities. The goals of the Local Foods, Local Places program are to create:

- More economic opportunities for local farmers and businesses.
- Better access to healthy, local food, especially among disadvantaged groups.
- Revitalized downtowns, main streets, and neighborhoods.

The Local Foods, Local Places program is supported by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the 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). Alamosa was one of 23 communities across the United States selected to participate in the program in 2017.

A Local Foods, Local Places Steering Committee formed in Alamosa in preparation for this technical assistance award is comprised of a variety of community partners (see Figure 6). The Steering Committee expressed a desire to build on the community's existing plans, which include the City of Alamosa Comprehensive Plan (2017), the Rio Grande Farm Park Master Plan (2017), and the San Luis Valley Trails and Recreation Master Plan (2014).

In their request for Local Foods, Local Places technical assistance, the San Luis Valley Local Foods Coalition and the Local Foods, Local Places Steering Committee named as primary goals better coordination among local and regional efforts, with specific attention to strengthening the local food economy, revitalizing Main Street, increasing involvement with the local arts community, increasing attendance at existing farmers markets, increasing food access and wellness, and strengthening the community's sense of place. Ultimately, the city aims to achieve its goal of improving the downtown area to become a center for local foods, local arts and entertainment, business, service, historic preservation, and tourism.

The remainder of this report and appendices document the engagement process, the workshop activities, and most importantly, the action plan and next steps for achieving the community's goals. One of the Steering Committee's responsibilities was to help plan the workshop and lay out the

## WORKSHOP STEERING COMMITTEE

- Julie Mordecai, Director, Director Rio Grande Farm Park
- Liza Marron, Executive Director, San Luis Valley Local Foods Coalition
- Hew Hallock, Director of Research, San Luis Valley Development Resources Group
- Patrick Steenburg, Public Works Director and City Manager, City of Alamosa (pre-workshop)  
Daniel E. Vaughn, Planning Specialist, City of Alamosa (post-workshop)
- Mandy Pittman, Farmers' Market Director, Alamosa Farmers' Market
- Randy Wright, Executive Director, Alamosa County Economic Development Corporation
- Lyndsey Williams, Director, San Luis Valley Food Bank Network
- Andy Rice, Community Activities Manager, City of Alamosa Parks and Recreation
- Amy McNamara, Community Futures Program Manager, The Trust for Public Land

*Figure 6 – People who served on the workshop Steering Committee and helped frame issues and goals in preparation for the workshop during pre-workshop conference calls.*

community's initial steps to implement the resulting action plan. They were supported by a technical assistance team comprised of consultants, federal agency partners, and other regional partners (Figure 7). Over the course of the three planning calls and workshop discussions, the community's goals evolved from those in the initial request for technical assistance to the four shown later in this report. They reflect the holistic, collaborative approach to community development underway in Alamosa.

## Engagement

The technical assistance engagement process for Local Foods, Local Places has three phases, illustrated in Figure 9 below. The assessment phase consists of three preparation conference calls with the Steering Committee to establish the workshop goals, agenda, logistics, and stakeholder invitation lists. The group also conducted a pre-workshop survey with business and community stakeholders. The convening phase includes the effort's capstone event—a two-day workshop in the community. The next phase includes three follow up conference calls as well as process reporting and documentation.

The community workshop was held on September 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>, 2017. Day one included a lunch gathering at Locavores restaurant with the Steering Committee members and federal partners, a tour of the community, and an evening community meeting at Alamosa City Hall. Day 2, also at Alamosa City Hall, included short presentations reviewing the work that organizations are already engaged in and what they are planning for the future, an action-planning session and a community mapping exercise. Lunch on day two was provided to all workshop attendees by the Steering Committee, featuring a wide variety of locally sourced food. All workshop exercises results are summarized in **Appendix A**, and sign-in sheets are provided in **Appendix B**.

## TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TEAM

- Ron Batcher, USDA Agricultural Marketing Services
- Cindy Cody, EPA Region 8
- Roxanne DeMarco, 1st SouthWest Bank, Community Development Finance Institution
- Jason Espie, Renaissance Planning, Technical Assistance Lead Facilitator
- John Foster, EPA Office of Sustainable Communities
- Joel Lehman, Renaissance Planning, Technical Assistance Support Facilitator
- Tim O'Connell, USDA Rural Development
- Pattie Snidow, USDA Rural Development
- Trent Thompson, Economic Development Administration

Figure 7 – People who served on the technical assistance team comprised of consultants, federal agency staff, and other regional partners.



Figure 8 – Workshop attendees identify opportunities and assets in Alamosa. Image Credit: Renaissance Planning



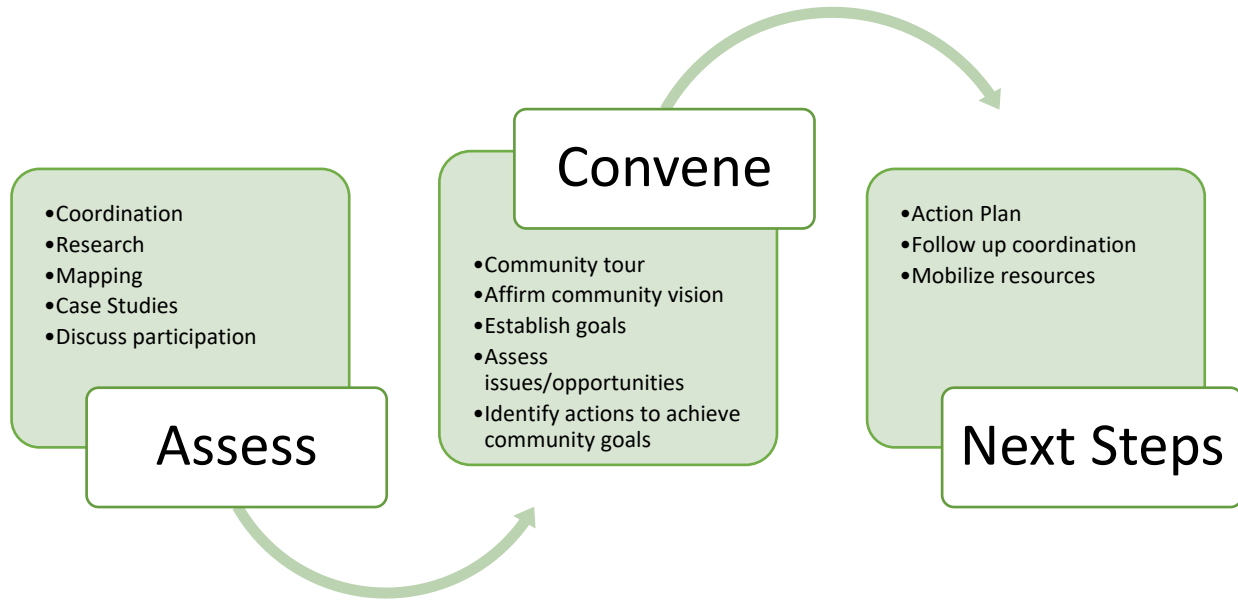


Figure 9 - Local Foods, Local Places Technical Assistance Process Diagram

## Community Tour

The Local Foods, Local Places Steering Committee led a tour of key places and projects in the Alamosa area. Sites visited include the San Luis Valley Local Foods Coalition, Rio Grande Farm Park, Milagros Coffee House, SquarePeg Brewwerks, San Luis Valley Brewing Company, Colorado Sports, Alamosa JCPenney’s, Boyd Community Garden, Valley Roots Food Hub and the site of the Alamosa Farmers’ Market. The tour provided an overview of the city’s challenges and opportunities and allowed for informal discussions about the local food system and place-making efforts. Several locations visited are shown in pictures here and in **Appendix C – Workshop Photo album**.



Figure 10 – The Steering Committee, consultants, and federal partners learn about the Boyd Community Garden. Image Credit: Renaissance Planning

## Vision and Values

The workshop was attended by about 40 Alamosa residents and federal agency representatives. During the community meeting on September 19, the technical assistance team facilitated a series of exercises that captured the group’s aspirations for the future of Alamosa and their understanding of the current challenges and opportunities relating to the city’s food economy.

First, every person in the room was asked to stand up and complete the sentences: “*I believe that my community...*” and “*I believe that local foods in Alamosa can...*”. This exercise captured how residents feel about their community and the role that local foods can play in Alamosa’s future. A word cloud of the results of this exercise are included in **Appendix A**. Next, community members were asked to write a newspaper headline about something positive happening in Alamosa 10 years from now. This captured the community’s vision for the future. Finally, participants used index cards to outline the challenges in achieving their vision and opportunities that can help Alamosa overcome those barriers. The community’s ideas are presented in Figure 11.

The visioning exercises revealed many of the group’s aspirations for becoming an innovator in local food, a model for rural revitalization, a community comprised of people that believe in local food, and a success story for community development around local food, art, music, and outdoor recreation.

It was against this positive, forward-thinking backdrop of values and visions for the future that the remainder of the workshop was built upon. The first day concluded with a review of the workshop goals and discussion about the direction for action planning, which took place the next day. These goals were further refined, evolving into the action plan implementation tables that are detailed at the end of this report. In addition to creating the action plan, the second day of the workshop included presentations from representatives of existing organizations that are engaged in related activities in the Alamosa area. A summary of the organizations and actors is provided below, and with more detail on each provided in **Appendix A**.

- **Adams State University** – Adams State University (ASU) is a comprehensive institution of higher education serving the San Luis Valley. ASU is facilitating the Value-Added Agriculture Sector Partnership effort. As a result, ASU has partnered with Colorado State University to offer an Agriculture degree in the Valley and plans to add a Food Studies program in Fall of 2018. ASU also

## CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

### Challenges:

- Connecting and empowering all groups
- Reaching disengaged and under-represented voices
- Communicating our message
- Funding
- Educational pipeline
- Changing status quo and existing mindset
- Breaking down silos
- Geographic location
- Poverty
- Crime

### Opportunities:

- People, social capital, and local talent
- Food leadership and existing food, outdoors, and other nonprofit organizations
- Recently completed Alamosa Comprehensive Plan
- Existing built environment
- Outdoor recreation, including the Rio Grande River
- Artists and musicians
- Resiliency
- Collaboration
- Adams State University

*Figure 11 - Workshop Participants’ summarized thoughts on the challenges and opportunities present in the local food system and downtown revitalization efforts.*



secured funding to complete a study of the economic impact of value-added agriculture in the San Luis Valley.

- **Alamosa County Economic Development Corporation** – Alamosa County Economic Development Corporation (ACEDC) wants to maximize local business activity by bringing businesses and civic organizations together to promote Alamosa and support new and existing businesses. ACEDC acts as the umbrella organization for the Alamosa County Chamber of Commerce who shares the vision of ACEDC in promoting business activity in Alamosa. ACEDC also acts as host for the San Luis Valley SBDC. Together, the three organization work to build local commerce through business retention, expansion, and attraction, while helping to build an attractive community, a critical piece of community viability.
- **Alamosa Farmers' Market** – The Alamosa Farmers' Market is an independent nonprofit organization. Located downtown since approximately 2000, the weekly Saturday market typically consists of approximately 30-40 vendors selling produce, farm goods, and value-added products like pies and jerky and re-selling direct farm purchases and crafts.
- **City of Alamosa** – In 2017 the City of Alamosa adopted a new comprehensive plan, the result of a two-year planning and outreach process. The plan calls for streetscape improvements in downtown Alamosa as well as incorporating more trails, wayfinding, and pedestrian features. The plan also identified a community desire to keep the Farmers' Market downtown, explore ways to incorporate public art, and better utilize the river corridor for environmental, quality of life, and cultural purposes. Overwhelmingly people said they want the city to be more proactive in economic development.
- **First Southwest Bank** – First Southwest Bank is a Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) in the Alamosa region. The primary mission is economic development. The CDFI status allows First Southwest Bank to access funding and capital through the United States Treasury that typical banks do not have access to. First Southwest Bank uses 14 of USDA's 47 programs and can assist in grant writing.
- **Food Bank Network** – Each year the Food Bank Network serves approximately 10,000-12,000 meals in the San Luis Valley. The network, comprised of 13 food banks, provides access to perishable, nonperishable, and educational resources to individuals and families.
- **Rio Grande Farm Park** – The Rio Grande Farm Park, situated along the Rio Grande across from Cole Park, is a 38-acre multi-use agricultural park that seeks to preserve agricultural heritage and create an equitable food system in Alamosa. In 2016, following a one-year planning effort, the park completed a Master Plan, which is intended to be a roadmap for the future. A Farm incubator on the land is host to seven aspiring farmers needing access to land and resources and ten immigrant families growing food for their Guatemalan community.
- **San Luis Valley Local Foods Coalition** – The San Luis Valley Local Foods Coalition (SLVLC) is a nonprofit organization based in Alamosa that seeks create a local food economy and develop opportunity for local bottom-up development. To this end, the SLVLC holds quarterly coalition meetings to serve as a farm-to-table network. Specific SLVLC projects include the Valley Roots Food

Hub, the Rio Grande Farm Park, Veteran Fields (a veteran-to-farmer initiative), SLV Farm to School Task Force (working with all 14 school districts), Cooking Matters (teaching low-income families how to cook healthy on a budget), Healthy Habits (providing cooking demos, tastes, and recipes at two farmers markets), Community Education, a Food Audit, and policy and advocacy work.<sup>8</sup>

- **San Luis Valley Development Resources Group** – The San Luis Valley Development Resources Group (SLVDRG) seeks to promote and facilitate economic development in the San Luis Valley. SLVDRG is actively engaged in conversations around the impacts of local foods and has access to low-interest loans. It also convenes the San Luis Valley Council of Governments and is the manager of the SLV Enterprise Zone program.
- **San Luis Valley Great Outdoors** – San Luis Valley Great Outdoors (SLV GO!) is an organization with a vision to enhance access to outdoor recreation opportunities and create new connections and trails. In 2014 SLV GO! worked with partner organizations and the community to complete the San Luis Valley Trails and Recreation Master Plan and is now convening a team to activate the Rio Grande corridor.
- **Valley Food Co-op** – Formed in 1980, the San Luis Valley Food Co-op has been a presence in the Alamosa community for 37 years. Located west of downtown Alamosa behind Villa Mall, the organization is owned by approximately 500 co-op members. Although the co-op is not located in downtown Alamosa, it has a desire to build a connection and support downtown activities.
- **Valley Roots Food Hub** – The Valley Roots Food hub is a regional aggregator and distributor of local foods. The organization provides grocers, restaurants, and institutions with fresh produce and other farm goods from local growers.<sup>9</sup> The hub is part of a cooperative of five food hubs, which have formed the Tap Root Cooperative to serve the Denver market. In 2015, the Valley Roots Food Hub began offering a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) box program to retail subscribers.

## Action Plan

The culminating product of the workshop was a community action plan. The plan is organized around four community goals and includes actions the participants brainstormed at the workshop and during follow-up calls. The following action plan matrix helps to identify needed actions, prioritize next steps, and define roles and responsibilities for moving forward. A list of funding resources (**Appendix D**) and references (**Appendix E**) are provided to aid the community in implementing the action plan.

### GOAL 1: Integrate local foods, art, music, and outdoor recreation as a community development strategy.

Workshop attendees expressed a desire to incorporate local food, art, music, and outdoor recreation into the region's economic development strategy. Through leveraging these areas of existing strength and building on them, workshop attendees identified specific actions that would benefit Alamosa's

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.slvlocalfoods.org/index.html>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.slvlocalfoods.org/foodhub.html>

broader economy through strengthening the local food system, enhancing outdoor recreation opportunities, and expanding local art initiatives.

<b>Action 1.1: Promote “Taste of Place” in Alamosa restaurants by featuring local foods identified by source on menus.</b>	
What this is and why it is important	Alamosa chefs and restaurants can play an important role in raising resident knowledge of and access to local foods through increasing the presence and branding of local foods on restaurant menus, like successful restaurants such as Windsor Hotel, Crestone Brewery, Mystic Biscuit, and others are doing. Through building relationships with restaurant owners, a wider range of local products could be introduced on menus, exposing residents to a “Taste of Place.” In the end, this could strengthen local farms and result in the increased availability and demand for fresher, healthier foods in the community.
Measures of success	When 5 local restaurants feature at least 3 strong local products year-round on their menu, with the source identified.
Timeframe	6 months (May 2018)
Lead	Jesse Marchildon, Farm Manager, Rio Grande Farm Park
Supporting cast	Valley Roots Food Hub; SLV Local Foods Coalition, farmers, Wendy Seeger of Locavores
Costs and/or resources needed	Restaurant menu revisions, recipe development, Valley Root Food Hub staff increase, marketing campaign, farmer bio posters and source stickers. Time of RGFP manager, SLVLFC staff, and VRFH staff
Possible funding sources	SURDNA Foundation ( <a href="http://www.surdna.org/">http://www.surdna.org/</a> )

<b>Action 1.2: Develop funding resources for enhancing community opportunities for recreation and outreach.</b>	
What this is and why it is important	Residents in Alamosa have expressed broad interest in expanding outdoor recreation opportunities. One limitation identified by workshop attendees towards expanding outdoor recreation opportunities is the lack of reliable funding. Through exploring potential options, such as a voluntary restaurant “tax,” more reliable funding sources could be identified and implemented that might help the community achieve its goals.
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Get 2 restaurants to participate in the volunteer tax.</li> <li>▪ Form an entity that curates where the money goes.</li> </ul>
Timeframe	1 year
Lead	San Luis Valley Great Outdoors (SLV GO, <a href="http://slvgo.com/">http://slvgo.com/</a> ), working with Julie Mordecai; Mick Daniel; Amy McNamara

<b>Action 1.2: Develop funding resources for enhancing community opportunities for recreation and outreach.</b>	
Supporting cast	Trust for Public Land, Alamosa Parks & Recreation, Inspire, Rio Grande Farm Park, KRZA Radio
Costs and/or resources needed	Time from committee members, money and time for marketing campaign, table tent, press, and moxie
Possible funding sources	Customers rounding up on their bills at participating restaurants; USDA Rural Development ( <a href="https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/rural-business-development-grants">https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/rural-business-development-grants</a> )

<b>Action 1.3: Identify funding to enable the infusion of local art into existing local businesses.</b>	
What this is and why it is important	Alamosa is home to a public art program called ArtScape, which temporarily places sculptures in public downtown spaces. Workshop attendees viewed this program as a success and expressed a desire to build on it through expanding its current reach in the public realm. In addition, workshop attendees expressed a desire to identify funding necessary to establish a new program that would place local art into businesses. Through building on the existing success of the ArtScape program, workshop attendees viewed this as an opportunity to expand the presence of art in the community and enhance Alamosa’s sense of place.
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 5 businesses add local art into their businesses</li> <li>▪ More public art and installations</li> </ul>
Timeframe	6 months to one year
Lead	Heather Brooks, Arts Committee
Supporting cast	Adams State University, Arts Advisory Group
Costs and/or resources needed	Time, materials, and supplies
Possible funding sources	National Endowment for the Arts Our Town Grant <a href="https://www.arts.gov/grants">https://www.arts.gov/grants</a>



<b>Action 1.4: Infuse resources, local food, and buying support at Valley Food Coop</b>	
What this is and why it is important	At present, Valley Food Co-op is the only local food outlet in Alamosa. It is also a member-owned and democratically controlled cooperative. It has recently undergone a much-needed change in management to solve issues of stagnation. While this situates the co-op in a position that makes it poised for success, workshop attendees identified that specific actions could be taken to strengthen the co-op’s role in the local food system. It was determined that an infusion of resources is needed to enable the co-op to sustain and strengthen its place in the local food economy. Through identifying methods for increasing the availability of resources to the co-op, steps could be taken to more fully stock the co-op and increase sales.
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increase in monthly sales</li> <li>▪ Stocked shelves</li> </ul>
Timeframe	Begin immediately
Lead	Donna Mabry, SLVLFC, and broader Alamosa community
Supporting cast	Valley Food Coop Board, Marlena Antonucci, KRZA
Costs and/or resources needed	Social media and start-up capital, inventory resources
Possible funding sources	Colorado Fresh Food Financing Fund (CO4F), USDA Community Facilities or Business Programs funding, Indiegogo or other social media efforts, SURDNA Foundation, Potential technical assistance from the Rocky Mountain Farmers Union ( <a href="https://www.rmfu.org/what-we-do/cooperation/co-op-development-center/">https://www.rmfu.org/what-we-do/cooperation/co-op-development-center/</a> )

<b>Action 1.5: Increase presence of local food at festivals and events; develop a new “Taste of Alamosa” event at Cole Park featuring local food stands that incorporates art, music, and other outdoors activities.</b>	
What this is and why it is important	Local food, art, and music have a presence at some public festivals and events in Alamosa, but workshop attendees identified that there are more opportunities to expand to all festivals and diversify at existing festivals. Additionally, a new festival called “Taste of Alamosa,” was proposed by workshop attendees. The goal of the proposed festival is to annually showcase art, music, and outdoor activities. Workshop attendees viewed increasing access to local food at cultural events as a method for expanding the market for local food, art and music as well as exposing a greater portion of the Alamosa community to products and resources that are available.
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Local food at all “Sundays at Six” events</li> <li>▪ “Taste of Alamosa” event planned at Cole Park that incorporates art, music, and outdoor activates</li> </ul>

<b>Action 1.5: Increase presence of local food at festivals and events; develop a new “Taste of Alamosa” event at Cole Park featuring local food stands that incorporates art, music, and other outdoors activities.</b>	
Timeframe	Summer 2018
Lead	Marty Jones, Alamosa Live Music Association
Supporting cast	San Luis Valley Local Foods Coalition, Healthy Habits, MOKI and the Adams State University Maker Space
Costs and/or resources needed	Staff time, refitting the MOKI to become a viable food truck, licenses, food, supplies, fuel, insurance. Lynnea Rappold of Environmental Health
Possible funding sources	Levitt Amp Grant, SURDNA Foundation

**GOAL 2: Prioritize economic development opportunities and revitalization efforts in downtown Alamosa.**

Although other workshop goals include actions that focus on all of Alamosa County, workshop attendees expressed a desire to utilize local food, art, and music to specifically target economic development and revitalization of downtown Alamosa.

<b>Action 2.1: Create local Downtown Advisory Board with diverse representation.</b>	
What this is and why it is important	A Downtown Advisory Board could function as a mechanism to bring together local business owners, government officials, advocates, and residents to identify a direction and set of priorities for downtown Alamosa. Through bringing a diverse set of voices together, the advisory board could be utilized to find consensus, set priorities, and build bridges. This is an existing initiative decided at a Chamber retreat held Five months ago.
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A Downtown Advisory Board is convened with dedicated volunteers.</li> <li>▪ Strong diversity on board made up of local businesses, local foods, art, and education.</li> </ul>
Timeframe	4 months (end of 1 <sup>st</sup> quarter 2018)
Lead	Heather Brooks from the City of Alamosa
Supporting cast	Local businesses, Chamber of Commerce, Alamosa Economic Development, San Luis Valley Local Foods Coalition, Farmers Market
Costs and/or resources needed	Alamosa city staff and volunteers
Possible funding sources	N/A

**Action 2.2: Survey and evaluate potential sites for the downtown farmers market.**

What this is and why it is important	Residents and business owners see the existing farmers market as an asset to downtown Alamosa. During the workshop, a clear desire was expressed by attendees to keep the market downtown. To help ensure its long-term feasibility, workshop attendees proposed that a survey be taken exploring potential future sites. In addition, it was proposed that this survey would be followed up with an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of each site identified. In the end, the goal as expressed by attendees was to preserve and strengthen this asset that is an important element to the development of downtown Alamosa. The weekday Market at the Rio Grande Farm Park is an essential component of the Alamosa Farmers' Market experience and will bring folks to the Farm Park to better understand its importance to the community as well.
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A list of potential sites is generated with several options.</li> <li>▪ Strengths and weaknesses of each site are identified.</li> </ul>
Timeframe	6 months (complete by July 2018)
Lead	Mandy Pittman, Farmers Market, Jesse Marchildon
Supporting cast	City of Alamosa, vendors, local/downtown businesses, Chamber of Commerce, Railroad, SLVLFC, Mandy and Alamosa Public Works, Rio Grande Farm Park
Costs and/or resources needed	Site maintenance, farmers market staffing time, electricity, trash services, signage, and marketing
Possible funding sources	USDA LFPP Farmers Market Grant, private funders who may be interested in supporting the farmers market downtown and at the park, SURDNA Foundation

**Action 2.3: Create an inventory of vacant and underutilized spaces in downtown Alamosa and develop an assessment of each site.**

What this is and why it is important	Workshop attendees viewed the creation of an inventory of vacant and underutilized sites in downtown Alamosa and a subsequent analysis of each site as an important step towards a strategic approach to revitalizing the area. Although workshop attendees viewed a comprehensive inventory as being necessary for the downtown area, several sites with specific interest were discussed. These include developing a new use for the old theater, relocating and reinvigorating the Valley Food Co-op into the downtown area, and assessing resident interest in keeping the Pink Elephant lot open. Through establishing a comprehensive inventory, workshop attendees viewed this action as a mechanism to help match opportunities with needs and facilitate strategic redevelopment decisions.
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<b>Action 2.3: Create an inventory of vacant and underutilized spaces in downtown Alamosa and develop an assessment of each site.</b>	
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A list of vacant properties and lots is developed.</li> <li>▪ Spaces are assessed and potential enhancement identified to include highest and best use.</li> </ul>
Timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ End of 3<sup>rd</sup> Q 2018</li> <li>▪ End of 4<sup>th</sup> Q 2018</li> </ul>
Lead	Downtown Advisory Board
Supporting cast	Alamosa GIS tech, Alamosa City Planner, Alamosa County Economic Development Corporation/Alamosa County Chamber of Commerce
Costs and/or resources	Mapping and economic analysis
Possible funding sources	USDA Community Facilities Direct Loan and Grant Program, DOLA State’s Main Street Program, Colorado Historical Fund, Downtown Colorado Inc (DCI)

<b>Action 2.4: Facilitate community participation in the implementation of downtown design and connection recommendations from the Comprehensive Plan.</b>	
What this is and why it is important	The City of Alamosa recently completed a comprehensive plan that includes design recommendations for streetscape improvements in downtown Alamosa and proposes greater pedestrian connectivity. City representatives at the workshop expressed a desire to implement this aspect of the comprehensive plan and identified a strong interest in gathering input from the community to identify their preferences. Specifically, the city is interested in conducting community engagement around what types of connections and design decisions the community would like to see as the city moves forward with implementing the plan.
Measures of success	Contract is awarded.
Timeframe	Begin process by end of 1 <sup>st</sup> Q 2018. Dependent on Successful Colorado Department of Local Affairs grant (pending approval).
Lead	City of Alamosa
Supporting cast	Colorado Department of Local Affairs Consultant, community/businesses/other stakeholders/railroad
Costs and/or resources needed	Assistance from the Chamber and ACEDC for business outreach as well as help from other Local Foods, Local Places partners for public outreach and participation. The City has budgeted \$100,000 and the DOLA grant added another \$100,000.



**Action 2.4: Facilitate community participation in the implementation of downtown design and connection recommendations from the Comprehensive Plan.**

Additional funding or resources	<p>EPA technical assistance programs offer various resources that could bring people together to support aspects of downtown design such as green infrastructure, complete streets and brownfield clean up. The programs are competitive. EPA contact: Tim Rehder.</p> <p>DOLA grant of \$100,000 for downtown design and preliminary engineering won in November 2017.</p>
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**GOAL 3: Increase and strengthen food access, learning programs, and infrastructure that celebrates Alamosa’s agricultural heritage.**

Workshop attendees viewed education as an important component in strengthening Alamosa’s local food economy and building awareness of its agricultural food heritage. To address this goal, workshop attendees identified actions that include establishing a culinary arts program, marketing food education classes, creating value added sector partnerships, developing a flowchart of resources for farmers, and implementing an annual summit. Through investing in education, workshop attendees viewed these steps as a method for both increasing utilization of existing programs, enhancing and strengthening the existing local food economy, and preserving an understanding of the region’s important agricultural heritage.

**Action 3.1: Implement a culinary arts program at Trinidad State Jr. College**

What this is and why it is important	<p>A workforce skilled in culinary arts is a valuable component of a local food system. Workshop attendees viewed the establishment of a culinary arts program at Trinidad State Jr. College as a mechanism to provide job training to residents while at the same time strengthening the local food economy through exposing diners to healthy, locally grown items in restaurants and other establishments. With the establishment of a culinary arts program, the region could expand public awareness and knowledge of local food, provide job skills to residents, and expand and strengthen the market for local foods in restaurants.</p>
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Feasibility study to determine if there is a market.</li> <li>▪ Ability to visit other programs regionally to determine best type of programming: credit/degree, certification, and concurrent with high schools.</li> <li>▪ Programs started if found to be feasible and needed.</li> <li>▪ People graduate.</li> </ul>
Timeframe	12 months
Lead	Julie Mordecai to work with Adams State University (ASU), Trinidad State Junior College (TSJC); Aaron to support Julie
Supporting cast	TSJC, Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area

<b>Action 3.1: Implement a culinary arts program at Trinidad State Jr. College</b>	
Costs and/or resources needed	Unknown
Possible funding sources	Foundation for Community Colleges, SURDNA Foundation, Sangre de Cristo National Heritage Area

<b>Action 3.2: Create a marketing plan to garner more awareness of Double Up Bucks, Cooking Matters, and other food education classes.</b>	
What this is and why it is important	<p>Although there are several important nutrition incentive and cooking resources in Alamosa, these programs are not being utilized to their fullest extent. To help facilitate a greater level of participation in these programs by those that might benefit, workshop attendees suggested the creation of a marketing plan with the intent of disseminating awareness of resources that are already available to the public. Through strategic marketing, messages could be created that would help target those who are unaware of existing resources, including Double Up Bucks, Cooking Matters, and other food-related resources. The message would be communicated with the goal of connecting existing resources to those that could benefit from them the most. This action would build upon existing efforts to promote Double Up Food Bucks and their ambassadors and to continue to work with Livewell Community Food project grant and cooking matters partners.</p>
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 100 percent increase in usage of Double Up Bucks.</li> <li>▪ Provide a “food expert” booth at the farmers market to share knowledge about local food use through developing recipes, cooking demonstrations, and presentations.</li> <li>▪ Increase outreach to individuals who qualify for SNAP to educate about Double Up Program.</li> <li>▪ Ambassador Program.</li> </ul>
Timeframe	24 months
Lead	San Luis Valley Local Food Coalition
Supporting cast	WIC, social services, health care providers, other local nonprofits, LiveWell USDA Community Food Project grant and Cooking Matters partners
Costs and/or resources needed	½ FTE
Possible funding sources	USDA Community Food Projects Grant, LiveWell Colorado, SURDNA Foundation

<b>Action 3.3: Develop value added sector partnerships.</b>	
What this is and why it is important	Value added sector partnerships can help producers process products and make new products. Workshops attendees viewed new partnerships in this area as creating the potential to increase producer income. Although opportunities are wide-ranging in this area, specific value-added opportunities discussed by workshop participants included greater use of the Food Hub kitchen for value added activities, establishing a local food meal delivery product similar to Blue Apron, and the development of a “fast food” business that uses local products.
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Hemp production and demand increases.</li> <li>▪ The Food Hub kitchen is more fully utilized and upgraded.</li> <li>▪ A “Local Blue Apron” is established.</li> <li>▪ A Healthy “fast food” business (possibly a food truck) opens—possibly at the Farm Park in the summers.</li> <li>▪ A commercial kitchen for value added production and for the event center at the Rio Grande Farm Park catering.</li> </ul>
Timeframe	In progress (12 months)
Lead	Adams State University (Beverlee)
Supporting cast	Valley Roots Food Hub, food co-op, farmers, SBDC, farmers market, Rio Grande Farm Park, SLV Small Business Development Center, Senator Bennet’s office
Costs and/or resources needed	Architectural assistance for local food facility development, incubator kitchen; business planning support and more
Possible funding sources	SURDNA Foundation. RMFU. USDA Rural Development Value-Added Producer Grant Program ( <a href="https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/value-added-producer-grants">https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/value-added-producer-grants</a> )

<b>Action 3.4: Develop a comprehensive flowchart that maps resources and steps for new farmers.</b>	
What this is and why it is important	A variety of resources are available for young farmers to expand their farming operations. This network, however, can be complex to navigate and difficult to understand (especially for farmers that primarily speak Spanish). Through assembling a comprehensive database of information and resources that can help farmers identify where to go for assistance, connections can be established that enable small growers to expand or diversify their operation. In the end, this increased collaboration could lead to broader economic gains in the Alamosa region and a more robust local food system. This is not limited to scaling-up production. It covers resources at almost all levels of production, including resources should a farmer decide to scale up (though not all farmers want to scale up). For example, this could include a lot of information on value-added agriculture.

<b>Action 3.4: Develop a comprehensive flowchart that maps resources and steps for new farmers.</b>	
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A meeting is convened in order to assist the farmers market vendors/farmers with understanding business planning support, as well as loan, financial, and other resources.</li> <li>▪ A flow chart is created and published that maps these resources.</li> <li>▪ Leading Edge training or Business Plan Assistance for Food Entrepreneurs.</li> <li>▪ Someone takes this on in an ongoing capacity, so that resources don't become outdated.</li> </ul>
Timeframe	6 months
Lead	San Luis Valley Local Foods Coalition (Brandon)
Supporting cast	All community partners, Kari Allen as strong support, RMFU
Costs and/or resources needed	Time from Vista volunteer
Possible funding sources	USDA Rural Development Value Added Producer grants, Rural Energy for America grants, and Rural Business Development Grants – availability/studies/market studies/business plans. <a href="https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services">https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services</a> ; SURDNA Foundation.

<b>Action 3.5: Hold a summit with different groups to discuss allocation of resources and priorities.</b>	
What this is and why it is important	Although there are several organizations working in the Alamosa region, workshop attendees identified an opportunity for increased coordination and collaboration among these organizations. Attendees proposed the establishment of a summit, to be held annually, with the goal of bringing these organizations together so that priorities could be set and resources could be allocated. Through identified shared goals and priorities and potential duplications of services, organizations in Alamosa can work together to more efficiently match their resources with the needs of the community.
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Programs are optimally funded.</li> <li>▪ San Luis Valley Development Resources Group, Marketing Board, and Alamosa County Economic Development representatives attend meeting.</li> </ul>
Timeframe	12 months (annual)
Lead	DRG (Kevin Wilkins), Julie Mordecai if Kevin is not interested
Supporting cast	Lenders, grant writers, and grantors; SLV Community Foundation



<b>Action 3.5: Hold a summit with different groups to discuss allocation of resources and priorities.</b>	
Costs and/or resources needed	USDA RD Technical Assistance – scope of work, plan refining, Q&A on applicants; EDA Business Loan Fund (partner w/ CDFI); Infrastructure; Opportunity for this to flow into the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) update in 2018 (U.S. EDA contact: Trent Thompson)
Possible funding sources	

**GOAL 4: Center youth and historically underrepresented members of the community in growing the Local Foods, Local Places initiatives.**

Workshop attendees expressed a clear desire to increase the diversity of individuals involved in local food, art, and outdoor recreation organizations and activities. To achieve this goal, several actions were identified to help existing organizations listen, identify, and address the needs of Alamosa youth and historically underrepresented members of the community. Specific actions to achieve this goal developed by workshop attendees include developing school curriculums, establishing a young farmer program, building relationships and an increased understanding of the needs of underrepresented populations, and reinvigorating the Mobile Kitchen (MOKI) to address this goal. Through focusing on listening, identifying community needs, and remaining open to new and innovative methods of engagement, attendees identified a path forward to making progress and addressing this need.

<b>Action 4.1: Develop and implement a public education curriculum around food systems, nutrition, and the local food economy.</b>	
What this is and why it is important	Workshop attendees identified schools as an important asset for reaching youth in the community. Due to the interdisciplinary nature of this subject, a customized curriculum could incorporate elements of history, nutrition, health, science, agriculture, and economics as part of a new curriculum. Attendees viewed the development of this new curriculum for use in schools as a mechanism to reach students who may otherwise not be exposed, as well as a means to impart skills and knowledge that will benefit students and the broader food system and health of the community.
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Have a curriculum for K-12 + higher education (Food Studies).</li> <li>▪ Boys and Girls Club activities expanded into K-12.</li> </ul>
Timeframe	Adams State University Food Studies (2018?)
Lead	Valley Educational Gardens Initiative, Farmer to School Task Force. Aaron and others gave presentation at ASU and the process started.
Supporting cast	Integrated Nutrition Education Program (Melissa)
Costs and/or resources needed	
Possible funding sources	

<b>Action 4.2: Develop a Rio Grande Farm Park Junior Farmer Incubator Program.</b>	
What this is and why it is important	Workshop attendees viewed exposing students to hands-on food and farming education as having a variety of benefits. Attendees hoped that the establishment of a Jr. Farmer Incubator program at the Rio Grande Farm Park would create a greater awareness of local food issues. In the end, the goal of this program would be multifaceted. First, it would help Alamosa youth develop valuable skills that are not just applicable in the agricultural and broad local food economy, but also would be translatable to other areas and professions. Second, a Jr. Farmer program was viewed as a mechanism for preparing a high-quality workforce of the future that would enable the local foods economy to continue to grow.
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The number of students completing program.</li> <li>▪ A survey measuring the translation and types of skills (6 months follow up).</li> <li>▪ Diversity of participants.</li> </ul>
Timeframe	6 months planning for pilot program followed by evaluation
Lead	Mark Skinner, Aaron Miltenberger, Farm to School Coalition, Peter Wise, and Jesse Marchildon.
Supporting cast	Adams State University, Alamosa High School, Alternative High School, online school platform, Rio Grande Junior Farmer Incubator Program
Costs and/or resources needed	Agriculture equipment, Bicycle and modification supplies
Possible funding sources	Growing Spaces, LLC high-altitude growing domes are a possible source for donation; SURDNA Foundation; Colorado Health Foundation

<b>Action 4.3: Reach out to youth and historically under-represented communities to identify their needs and the best methods to increase engagement around local foods activities.</b>	
What this is and why it is important	Workshop attendees identified that a significant portion of the community is underrepresented in many of the local food, art, and recreational organizations in Alamosa. Attendees discussed cultivating connections with youth and underrepresented populations as a method for identifying ways to reach out and include more individuals.
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Number of organizations reached.</li> <li>▪ New and innovative engagement methods are used.</li> <li>▪ Number and diversity of new volunteers in local foods organizations.</li> <li>▪ Changed perception and attitude.</li> <li>▪ Ability to answer, “what’s in it for me?” for all people.</li> </ul>

<b>Action 4.3: Reach out to youth and historically under-represented communities to identify their needs and the best methods to increase engagement around local foods activities.</b>	
Timeframe	Begin in 2018 with identifying underrepresented populations, building connections and listening.
Lead	Rio Grande Farm Park (Julie Mordecai), working with Marlena Antonucci, Liza Marron, and others who could carry it forward
Supporting cast	San Luis Valley Local Foods Coalition (Liza Marron)
Costs and/or resources needed	Review farm park master plan and build on it.
Possible funding sources	AmeriCorp Vista to build capacity for this youth initiative

<b>Action 4.4: Conduct needs and feasibility assessment of the Mobile Kitchen (MOKI). Make modifications and improvements as identified to expand its presence in the community.</b>	
What this is and why it is important	The Mobile Kitchen (MOKI) is an asset to the local food economy in Alamosa. In its present state, however, workshop attendees viewed the MOKI's future as being in peril. Some workshop attendees noted that the MOKI may not be in compliance with regulations and thought that changes are needed to ensure it survives and can continue to function. To ensure that the full potential of the MOKI can be realized, it is necessary to perform an assessment of the MOKI, identify what needs it can best address, and perform a feasibility analysis. After these steps are conducted, the necessary changes can be implemented. In the end, through better understanding community needs and retooling the MOKI, workshop attendees viewed it as a valuable tool to engage youth and the broader community and ultimately increase access to local food products.
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Evaluate the current state of the MOKI</li> <li>▪ Identify needs and purpose of the MOKI</li> <li>▪ Conduct a feasibility assessment and examine case studies from other Local Foods, Local Places communities</li> <li>▪ Receive funding and make improvements as identified</li> </ul>
Timeframe	2 months for evaluation phase, 1 year for funding and implementation
Lead	Meet with interested parties, Brandon Cari Canri
Supporting cast	Rio Grande Farm Park, Valley Roots Food Hub, Alamosa County Public Health Department, Colorado Dept. of Health and Environment, Lynnea Rappold, San Luis Valley Local Foods, Mandy Pittman (Farmers' Market), Brandon Cox
Costs and/or resources needed	Approximately \$2,000 for feasibility study and \$5,000 for renovations
Possible funding sources	SURDNA Foundation, USDA Local Food Promotion Program, RMFU

## Implementation and Next Steps

Three post-workshop conference calls were held from September through December 2017, following the workshop. The calls were held with the Local Foods, Local Places Steering Committee and additional stakeholders whose interest was cultivated during the workshop. They worked to refine the action plan and add clarifying language. Some of the key actions and post-workshop developments included the following:

- Identifying actions that the committee sees as “low hanging fruit,” where the local community has champions to lead, and prioritize them.
- Reaching out and include additional people and organizations identified as part of the action planning process as the committee moves forward in the process.
- Prioritizing fundraising and plan implementation.
- Finding ways to expand the dialog about the Local Foods, Local Places plan with underrepresented members of the community. This is an on-going challenge but needs priority attention going forward.
- Organizing the Local Foods, Local Places steering committee and workshop participants to meet on a regular basis following the workshop to collaborate on plan implementation.
- USDA Rural Development in Colorado provided community facilities funds to SLVFC and Valley Roots Food Hub to purchase a new refrigerated delivery truck to replace the one that recently burned. This replacement was a critical need to ensure ongoing operations of the food hub. Insurance monies from the previous truck were used as a match for the new.

## Appendices

- Appendix A – Workshop Feedback, Exercise Results, Mapping and Documentation
- Appendix B – Workshop Sign-in Sheets
- Appendix C – Workshop Photo Album
- Appendix D – Funding Resources
- Appendix E – References