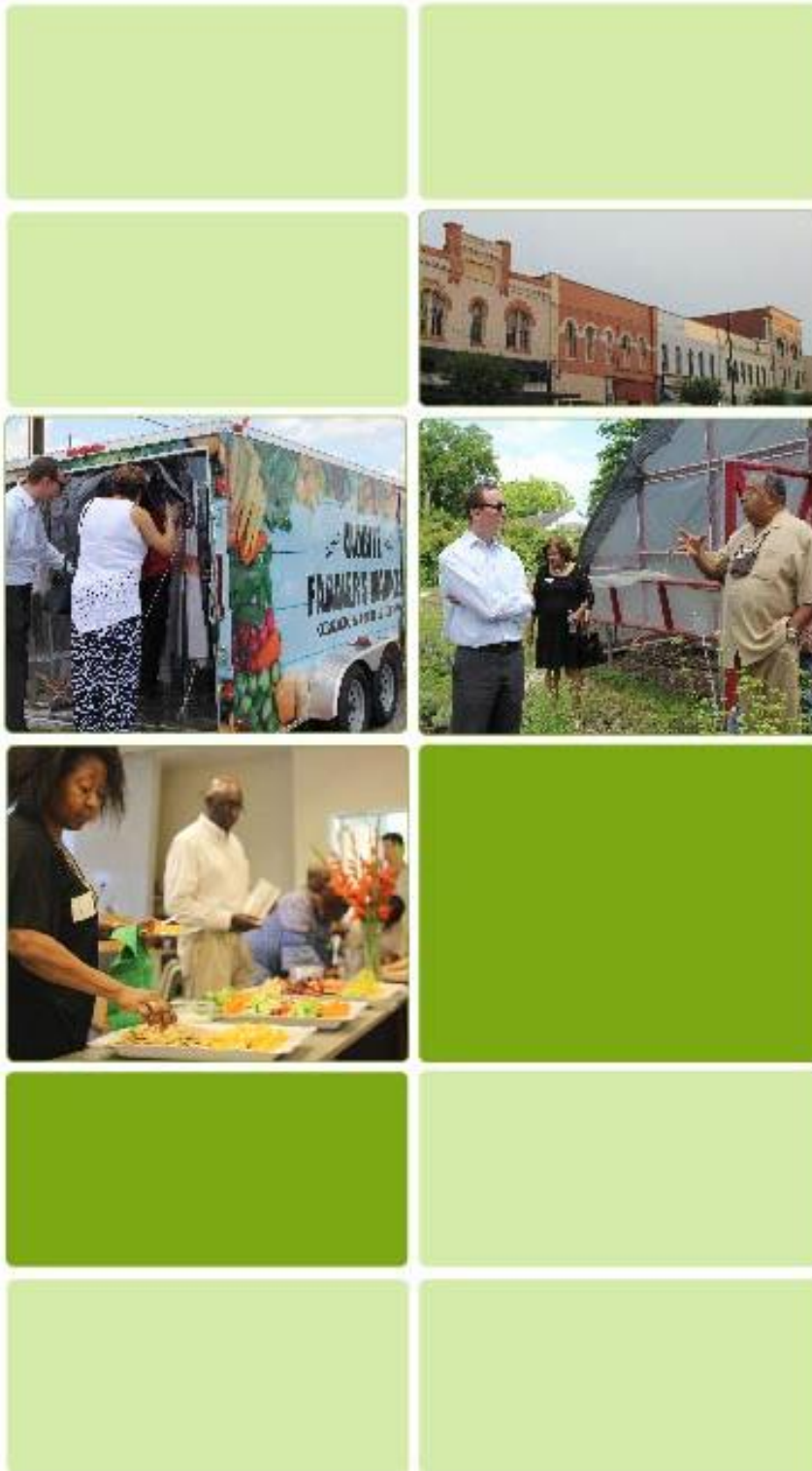




LOCAL FOODS, LOCAL PLACES

Technical Assistance Program



Local Foods, Local Places Community Action Plan for Henderson, North Carolina

August 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

Henderson is a city of about 15,000 people in central North Carolina, 40 miles north of the state’s capital city, Raleigh. Settled in the 1700s, Henderson is a rural city and the county seat of Vance County. The arrival of the railroad passenger station in 1837 spurred economic growth for the city. Henderson became a hub of activity for the tobacco, cotton, and textile industries.¹ Today, the Vance Furniture Company, which was established in 1941, is the longest-standing business downtown.² Roses Discount Stores was also started in Henderson and is still based in the city’s downtown. Today, about 1,500 people work in downtown Henderson, employed primarily by city and county government.



Figure 1 – Henry and Ardis Crews show the technical assistance team and federal partners around the Crews family urban farm. Image Credit: Renaissance Planning

The main thoroughfare, Garnett Street, is characterized by historic architecture, and downtown is classified as a historic district in the National Register of Historic Places. The Henderson-Vance Downtown Development Commission offers several economic incentives for downtown development including grants for façade upgrades, interior improvements, and workforce development. Despite many storefront vacancies along Garnett Street, many of the second-story units have been successfully transformed into apartments through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s Hope VI affordable housing program. Downtown has 72 renter-occupied apartments, including senior housing. The historic railway still runs through the center of downtown but no longer stops to serve local businesses or residents. Downtown is also home to four historic churches, an iconic fire station clock tower, several locally owned businesses, and the newly revitalized Breckenridge Street and Embassy Square district. This development is part of a slowly building momentum for economic growth and investment in downtown Henderson. Proximity to the fast-growing Triangle region, the well-traveled Interstate 85 and U.S. Highway 1, and the popular tourist and recreational destination of Kerr Lake positions Henderson to take advantage of economic opportunities in the region.

Despite some growth, Henderson still faces many socio-economic challenges. Low median household incomes, low home-ownership rates, and an aging population have made it difficult to attract industry, investment, and young families. The poverty rate (30 percent) is higher than the state poverty rate of 25 percent. The poverty rate is even higher amongst children in the city at 46 percent. Median household income in the city is \$23,904 compared to \$46,868 statewide.³ When it comes to health, the rates of obesity, coronary heart disease, and diabetes in Henderson are higher than that of North Carolina.⁴ (For the full community data profile, see **Appendix A.**)

¹ City of Henderson. “About.” <http://ci.henderson.nc.us/about/>. Accessed July 14, 2017.

² Vance Furniture Company. “About Us.” http://www.vancefurniture.com/about_us.html. Accessed July 14, 2017.

³ U.S. Census. “2011–2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table DP05: ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates.” https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_15_5YR_DP05&prodType=table. Accessed July 14, 2017.

⁴ Healthy Food Access Portal. “Mapping Tool.” <http://www.healthyfoodaccess.org/get-started/research-your-community>. Accessed July 14, 2017.

Several organizations and institutions in Henderson are responding to the economic conditions and health challenges by increasing access to fresh and healthy foods, and making local foods part of the community’s economic and community development strategy. They recognize that the popularity of local foods can be used to attract more people and businesses into the city’s downtown. Some of the key partners in this endeavor include the Green Rural Development Organization (GRRO), The North Carolina Cooperative Extension, the Conservation Fund, the Vance County Regional Farmers Market, and faith groups including Area Christians Together on Service (ACTS).



Figure 2 –The Green Rural Redevelopment Organization (GRRO) Mobile Market. Image Credit: Renaissance Planning

In 2016, the Henderson-Vance Downtown Development Commission requested assistance through the Local Foods, Local Places program to develop an action plan for using local foods to build community and attract new investment to the city’s downtown and adjacent neighborhoods. The commission’s goals for food are consistent with the goals of the Local Foods, Local Places program, which 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, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the U.S. Department of Transportation, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Appalachian Regional Commission, and the Delta Regional Authority. Henderson was one of 24 communities across the United States selected to participate in the program in 2017.

A variety of community partners came together in Henderson to form a Local Foods, Local Places steering committee in preparation for the technical assistance (Figure 3). The committee intends to continue working together as a group following the technical assistance in order to implement the goals and actions outlined in this

LOCAL FOODS, LOCAL PLACES STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Carolyn Powell, Henderson-Vance Downtown Development Commission

Corey Williams, City of Henderson

Tanya Weary, Small Business Center Network

Vanessa Jones, Henderson-Vance Chamber of Commerce

Ardis Crews, Micro Market Farms

Paul McKenzie, Vance County Center

Henry Crews, Green Rural Redevelopment Organization

Figure 3 – The Henderson Local Foods, Local Places Steering Committee

report. Prior to the Local Foods, Local Places process, these engaged stakeholders had already established a network of urban farms on empty lots throughout the city and launched a pop-up market downtown using the GRRO mobile food trailer. The pop-up market accepts SNAP benefits and even offers a Double Bucks program to increase the buying power of this critical program for alleviating hunger in the community.



Figure 4 – Downtown Henderson. Image Credit: Renaissance Planning

In preparation for Local Foods, Local Places technical assistance, the Henderson-Vance Downtown

Development Commission identified four primary goals on which to focus the program. These were to:

- Launch a farmers market downtown for the upcoming growing season.
- Develop a vision for the green space at Embassy Square.
- Connect people to downtown through pedestrian and connectivity improvements.
- Identify steps beyond the farmers market for building community and economic growth through local foods.

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. The action plan reflects the holistic, collaborative approach to community development already underway in Henderson.

Engagement

The technical assistance engagement process for Local Foods, Local Places has three phases, illustrated in Figure 5 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 convening phase includes the effort’s capstone event—a two-day workshop in the community. The next steps phase includes three follow-up conference calls as well as process reporting and documentation.

The community workshop was held on June 6th and June 7th, 2017. It included a small lunch gathering with the steering committee members and federal partners, a tour of the community, an evening community meeting at the Perry Memorial Library on day 1 and an action-planning session also at the Perry Library on day 2. The workshop sign-in sheets are provided in **Appendix B**.

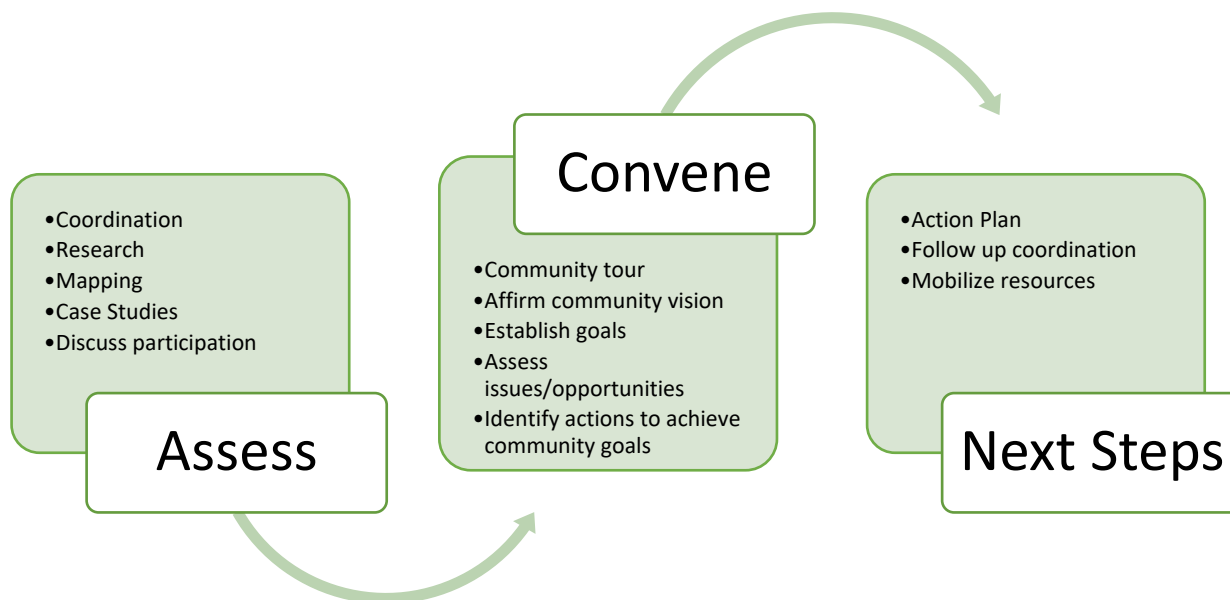


Figure 5 - Local Foods, Local Places Technical Assistance Process Diagram

Lunch and Community Tour

The Local Foods, Local Places steering committee organized a luncheon on June 6th with key stakeholders at the Vance County Regional Farmers Market to introduce the project to the technical assistance team consisting of consultants and federal agency representatives. Following the luncheon, the steering committee led a tour of key places and projects in the Henderson area including downtown Henderson, residential neighborhoods around downtown, the Ruth Hughes and Brodie Family Community Garden, the GRRO Mobile Market, McGregor Performing Arts Center, and the city-owned vacant lot at Embassy Square. 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 the locations visited are shown in pictures here and in **Appendix C**.



Figure 6 – Workshop participants help themselves to fresh, local refreshments at the Perry Memorial Library, Farm Bureau Room. Image Credit: Renaissance Planning

Vision and Values

Nearly 50 Henderson residents and federal agency representatives attended a community meeting on June 6th, during which the technical assistance team facilitated a series of exercises that captured the group’s aspirations for the future of Henderson and their understanding of the current challenges and opportunities facing the city. First, facilitators asked every person in the room to stand up and complete the sentences: “I believe that downtown Henderson...” and “I believe that local foods in our community can...”. This exercise captured how residents feel about their community and the role that local foods

can play in Henderson’s future. Next, the facilitators asked community members to come up with a narrative about progress in Henderson 20 years from now. On index cards, participants responded to the following prompts:

1. It’s 2037, and you are sent to report on how downtown Henderson has changed over the last 20 years. What do you find? What good things are happening at Embassy Square?
2. What are the greatest opportunities for using food to attract people downtown and to support new businesses?
3. What do you think needs to happen to achieve these great things? Think of specific steps the community or the city can take to help.

This exercise captured the community’s vision for the future, the challenges in achieving their vision, and opportunities that can help Henderson overcome those barriers. The community’s ideas are summarized in Figure 6 and presented in **Appendix D**.

Residents’ aspirations for downtown Henderson and the Embassy Square area include creating a thriving, revitalized hub of community and economic activity focused around food. Workshop participants envisioned a vibrant civic space with family-oriented events, music, festivals, and overall improvements in health, well-being, connectivity, and community pride. 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 to follow the next day.

The second day of the workshop focused on refining the goals and building a series of action items based on the vision developed on Day 1. The technical assistance team facilitated exercises that helped transform the ideas from the first day into a concrete and strategic plan. They began with a presentation of case studies covering best practices for farmers markets and quality civic spaces. In breakout groups, the workshop participants then brainstormed priorities for the downtown farmers market and Embassy Square from the perspective of different stakeholders including residents of Henderson, downtown

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Challenges:

- Difficulty working together
- Need for better city and county collaboration
- Need for volunteers
- Fear of change, failure, and success
- Poverty
- Lack of funding
- Not enough business uses downtown that encourage walking
- People are comfortable staying home or traveling long distances to be comfortable
- Questions about the viability of a downtown market
- Perception that downtown is not safe
- Lack of affordable, mixed-use housing

Opportunities:

- Strong organizational leadership: Local government, faith community, community college, NCSU/A&T Extension, Henderson-Vance Downtown Development Corporation, GRRO
- Existing buildings and their attractive architecture
- Embassy Cultural Center Foundation
- 246 farms & knowledge of agriculture in the county
- Vacant lots and buildings (up to 400 owned by city/county)
- 8,000 people around downtown; 1,500 jobs
- Desire from community
- Access – I-85, Triangle, and Kerr Lake

Figure 7 - Workshop Participants’ summarized thoughts on the challenges and opportunities present in the local food system and downtown revitalization efforts.

business owners, and visitors from out of town. These priorities subsequently shaped the actions for the implementation plan. Workshop participants also had an opportunity to think through challenges and opportunities for downtown connectivity during an exercise that entailed mapping key walking routes and opportunities to improve them. They identified poor signage and wayfinding as a main challenge, and the rail line between Henderson and Oxford, North Carolina, as a key opportunity to create a walking and biking path between the two communities. A full list of findings and feedback of each exercise is available in **Appendix D**.

In addition to developing an action plan, the technical assistance team also helped the community come up with a design vision for the last remaining vacant parcel in the Embassy Square district, which includes the existing performing arts center, the Perry Library, the police station, Breckenridge Street, and the vacant city-owned lot on the corner of Chestnut and Montgomery streets. The final design concept included a multi-purpose pavilion where the downtown farmers market might be, a performance or music stage, open green space, restrooms, mixed use office and retail (private and municipal), and branding and iconography that represents Henderson's identity and history. Figure 9 shows a designer presenting the concept to workshop participants. A full explanation of the design concept is available below.

Design Concept

Since the 1990s, the Embassy Square district in downtown Henderson has been the focus of major revitalization efforts. Through a series of public-private partnerships with the Embassy Cultural Foundation, the city of Henderson has developed the Perry Library, a new police station, and the McGregor Performing Arts Center, with a rejuvenated Breckenridge street as the central spine of the area. Due to fiscal constraints, plans for a fourth building—a municipal building to house city hall—have not yet materialized. The city of Henderson and the Embassy Cultural Foundation have plans to build an amphitheater complex on the vacant city-owned lot. The city is planning as a first step to build a multi-purpose pavilion. The lot currently hosts a pop-up mobile market managed by the Green Rural Redevelopment Organization and is the desired home for a permanent downtown farmers market.



Figure 8 – A workshop participant explains the findings of the walkable Henderson mapping exercise. Image Credit: Renaissance Planning



Figure 9 – A member of the technical assistance team presents the community design vision. Image Credit: Renaissance Planning

The workshop yielded several tangible results that can help catalyze this vision in the future. Through the input of community participants, the technical assistance team developed a series of design concepts, not only for the development of a downtown farmers market, but for the development of future municipal buildings, retail and office space, and a thriving multi-use public space. In summary, the draft design concepts produced during the workshop included the following:

1. Site analysis of Embassy Square and adjacent streets.
2. Proposed site plan for the redevelopment of the vacant lot at Embassy Square into a multi-use public/private space.
3. Streetscape improvements for the intersection of Breckenridge and Garnett streets to draw people into the Embassy Square district.

Site Analysis

As a first step in the design process, the technical assistance team analyzed both the site and surrounding area from a professional planning perspective and sought the input of participants in the workshop. A visual representation of the analysis is available in Figure 10. Among the important observations are the following:

- The existing development at Embassy Square, including the McGregor Performing Arts Center, the Perry Memorial Library, the Henderson Police Department, and the renovated Breckenridge Street, were constructed on an axis as part of a master plan vision for area. Future development on the vacant, city-owned lot could be built to complete the axis.
- The vacant, city-owned greenspace is steeply sloped down (north) towards the intersection of Chestnut and Montgomery streets. The grading can be an opportunity for the construction of a naturally sloped amphitheater with views down towards a stage at the corner of Chestnut and Montgomery.
- As a result of the slope, from the Chestnut/Montgomery intersection at the northern end of the site there are views up the hill towards the police station.
- The highest point of the site (at the southern end, adjacent to the police department parking lot) has panoramic views of Embassy Square, downtown Henderson, and surrounding residential neighborhoods. From this point the iconic Henderson Fire Station Clock Tower is also visible. These views have the potential to make the high point of the site an attractive and vibrant destination.
- Chestnut Street is characterized by high speed traffic and road noise.
- Breckenridge street is characterized by pedestrian-friendly amenities, including wide sidewalks, traffic-calming elements, and vegetation.
- Some of the streets adjacent to Embassy Square have active storefronts and businesses, accessible and attractive facades, and sidewalks. These streets could form the basis of a more walkable, vibrant district. However, interspersed among these more walkable areas are street segments with dilapidated or uninterrupted brick face or concrete facades.

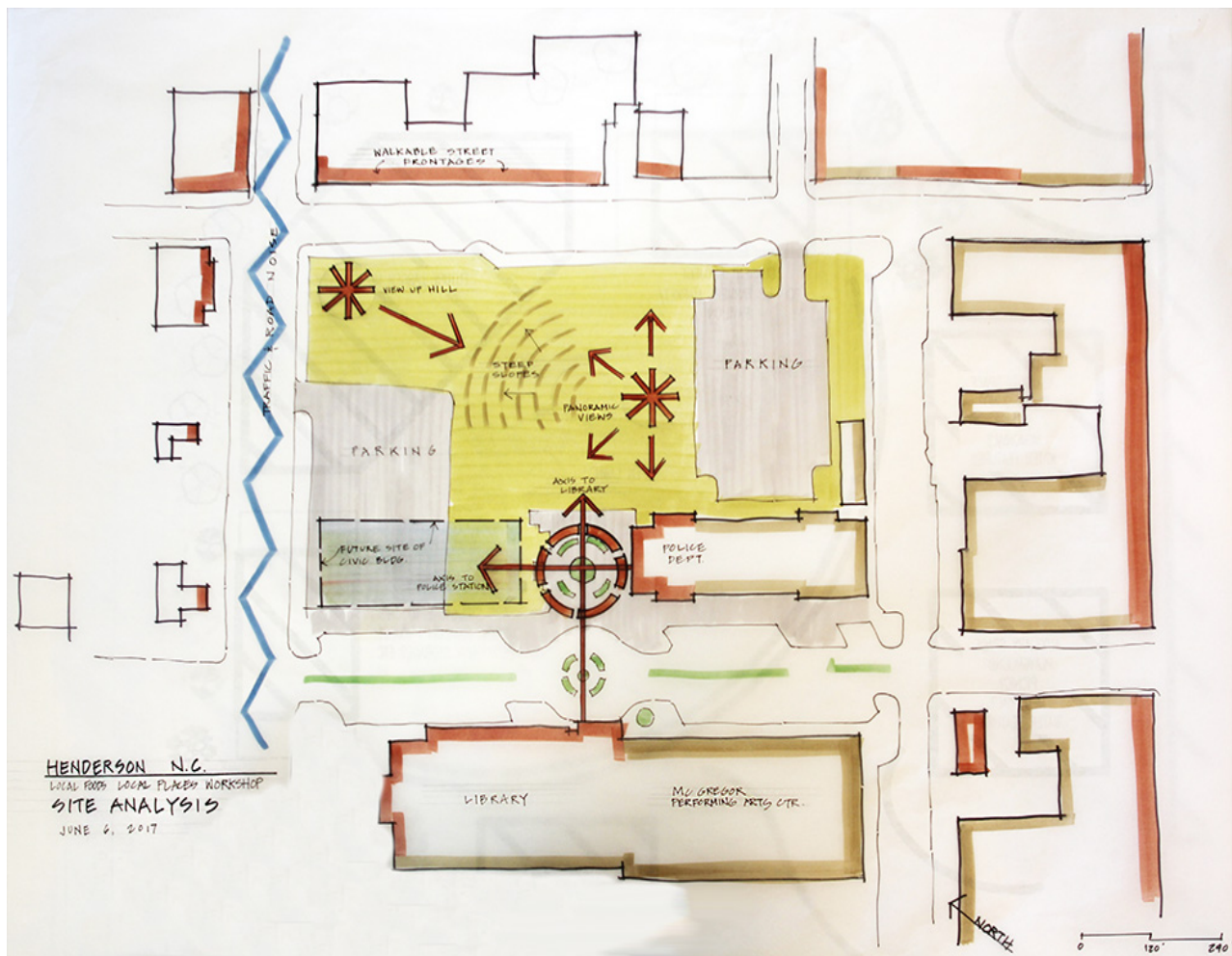


Figure 10 - Site analysis of Embassy Square, the vacant city owned property, and adjacent streets. Image credit: Renaissance Planning

Proposed Site Plan

The proposed site plan (Figure 11) for Embassy Square reflects the desired program elements that participants identified during the workshop. It includes a multi-use pavilion, a stage, a town green, a new municipal building, and opportunities for retail and office space. Workshop participants indicated that a multi-purpose pavilion that could house the downtown farmers market would likely be the priority for implementation of the proposed site plan.

The design concept completes the axis that was started with the construction of the police station, library, and performing arts center. The final piece of the axis is proposed as a new municipal building. The cross section in Figure 10 shows this building as a mixed-use building, with office and retail space, as well as parking. Public-private partnerships between the city and developers will likely be an essential source of fiscal support for this project. The design extends the east-west axis from the entrance to the library through to Montgomery Street in the form of a pedestrian walkway. The walkway would provide

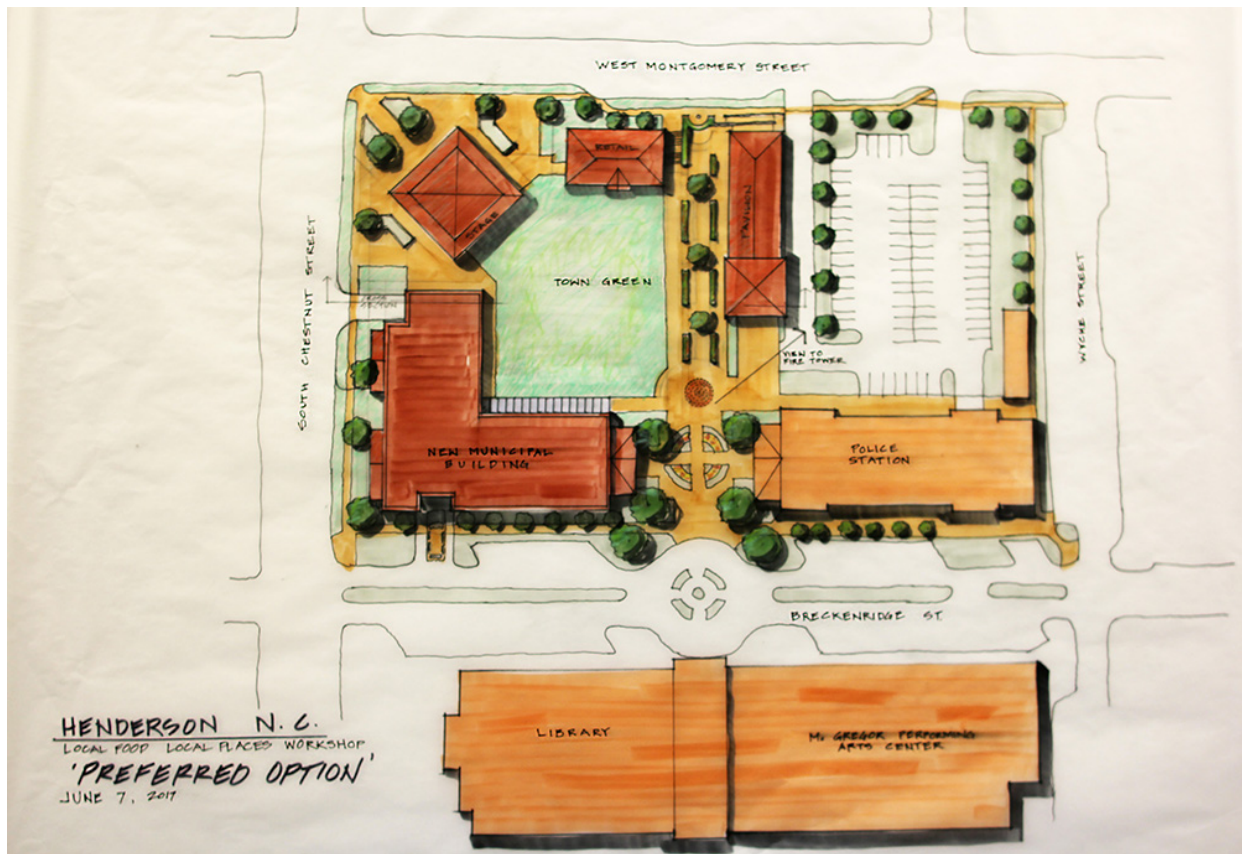


Figure 11 - Proposed site plan for the Embassy Square site Image credit: Renaissance Planning

pedestrian connectivity between Breckenridge and Montgomery streets, access to the town green and pavilion, and views to the iconic clock tower. The walkway is also imagined as having space for vegetation, a water feature, and some kind of memorial or cultural icon (such as a veterans’ memorial at the end of the walkway facing the library).

The focus of the site is a multi-use civic space that can transform Embassy Square into a destination in downtown Henderson for residents and visitors alike. The civic space is designed to have multiple elements including a stage, a town green, a pavilion, and retail space. The stage is located at the intersection of Chestnut and Montgomery streets. This location would act as a buffer between the town green and the traffic and noise of Chestnut street. The grade of the site would mean the town green would slope down towards the stage as a natural amphitheater. The multi-use pavilion is imagined at the southern edge of the site – the highest point. This would provide the pavilion with panoramic views of downtown Henderson and Embassy Square. Backing onto the police station makes it an ideal space for a downtown farmers market and similar events, as vendor trucks can pull up behind the pavilion. Retail space along Montgomery Street would act to draw people into Embassy Square and promote economic development in the area overall.

The cross section in Figure 12 provides more detail about the relationship between the various features on the site, as well as how the grading affects the site layout. The design proposes using the natural grade to provide ground floor parking in the municipal building, as shown in Figure 10.



Figure 12 - Cross Section of the Site Plan for Embassy Square

Breckenridge Street Improvements Concept

A main focus of the workshop was improving overall pedestrian connectivity in downtown Henderson, and making Embassy Square a vibrant destination and hub of activity. In addition to a conceptual site plan for the Embassy Square district, the technical assistance team designers produced a conceptual sketch of the entrance to Breckenridge Street (Figure 13). The design visualizes how low-cost improvements such as signage and iconography could help to draw people down Breckenridge Street from Garnett Street and into the civic space and farmers market at Embassy Square. Figure 13 shows banners that read “Henderson Market Days” and “Welcome” placed progressively down the street. It also shows a clock and information booth, modelled on the iconic fire station clock tower, that help frame the entrance to the street. They serve an aesthetic function in line with Henderson’s historic and architectural context.



Figure 13 – Street improvement concept for the intersection of Garnett Street and Breckenridge (looking northwest down Breckenridge)

The design concepts presented in this section were well received by workshop participants. The following section presents the action plan, which is a roadmap with short term steps for implementing the concepts.

Action Plan

The culminating product of the workshop is the following community action plan. The plan is organized around **three community goals** and includes actions that participants brainstormed at the meeting and during follow-up calls. The following action plan matrix helps to identify actions, prioritize next steps, and define roles and responsibilities for moving forward. The plan identifies **two priority actions (in bold)** that the community hopes to tackle first. These priority actions are essential next steps that support and create momentum for the rest of the action plan. The action plan concludes with one long-term goal to be considered for 5+ year timeframe. A list of funding resources (**Appendix E**) and references (**Appendix F**) are provided to aid the community in implementing the action plan.

Goal 1: Design and envision a thriving place

- **Action 1.1: Share the site design concept with City Council (priority action)**
- Action 1.2: Conduct community meetings and public outreach to finalize and gain support for the site design
- Action 1.3: Conduct fundraising for design implementation

Goal 2: Expand and sustain the mobile market to provide food access and distribution downtown

- **Action 2.1: Secure funding for the ongoing operations of mobile market/ downtown food distribution (priority action)**
- Action 2.2: Develop a marketing and promotion plan for healthy eating, including food-oriented events
- Action 2.3: Conduct a community food system assessment or asset mapping

Goal 3: Use food to build community

- Action 3.1: Use the Local Foods, Local Places action plan to bring together the city of Henderson and Vance County around downtown economic development
- Action 3.2: Create a pilot program for urban farms or community gardens on public properties
- Action 3.3: Explore the feasibility of a community kitchen or processing facility supporting local food businesses

Long Term Revitalization Goal: Connect People to Downtown (See appendix G)

GOAL 1: Design and envision a thriving place

A major focus of the Local Foods, Local Places workshop was brainstorming and articulating a holistic, long-term vision for the Embassy Square district that includes the existing cultural and institutional buildings, as well as a multi-purpose pavilion to house the downtown farmers market, an events space for outdoor concerts and theaters, and a vibrant civic space. The visioning exercise was translated into a site design that can be used by city government, community groups, private donors, and local businesses and investors to fund and guide development at Embassy Square for the next 20 years. The design is visualized in figures 10 – 13.

Action 1.1: Share the site design vision with City Council (PRIORITY ACTION)

<p>What this is and why it is important</p>	<p>The site design developed during the Local Foods, Local Places workshop integrates the desires and ideas collected from all those in attendance with the original vision for the site, recent plans for the pavilion development, and a technical assessment of the site conditions (including grading, traffic flow, views, and relationship to the rest of downtown). The design takes a long-term holistic approach to future development at Embassy Square that can be implemented in phases, beginning with the pavilion construction. The ultimate result is imagined as a vibrant, multi-purpose destination in downtown Henderson. Achieving this vision will take support from the city of Henderson—both financial and otherwise. Meeting with the City Council to present the site design and action plan is an essential step in acquiring support for the vision. In addition, any conversation with the UNC School of Government Development Finance Initiative about a redevelopment plan for Henderson can integrate the Local Foods, Local Places design and action plan. As a priority action, this step supports and creates momentum for the rest of the plan.</p>
<p>Measures of success</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The site design is reviewed by the Henderson-Vance Downtown Development Commission Design Committee, then the full board. Once approved, the plan is presented to the Henderson City Council. • The City Council indicates support for the vision. • The city moves forward with a pavilion design and construction that functions as a foundation for the overall site vision. • The Local Foods, Local Places action plan is integrated into existing development efforts.
<p>Timeframe</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 – 6 months
<p>Lead</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carolyn Powell (Henderson-Vance Downtown Development Commission) and Corey Williams (City of Henderson)
<p>Supporting cast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Foods, Local Places steering committee • Henderson-Vance Downtown Development Commission
<p>Costs and/or resources needed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff time
<p>Possible funding sources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A

Action 1.2: Conduct community meetings and public outreach to finalize and gain support for the site design

What this is and why it is important	<p>The Local Foods, Local Place workshop included a community meeting on the evening of May 31st at the Perry Library. About 40 community members attended, and the ideas they shared were integrated into the action plan and site design. The local steering committee indicated that it is important that all Henderson residents have an opportunity to weigh in about the future of Embassy Square, especially if the vacant lot is to become a community gathering space. Additional community meetings that attract a wider variety of community members and stakeholders—including representatives from all community and civic groups and socioeconomic sectors—is an important step in working towards the vision for the site. People are more likely to support the project and engage with the development process if they are involved from the beginning.</p>
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of people attending the meetings. • Number of community and civic groups contacted. • Frequency of public outreach initiatives. • Number of flyers printed, emails sent, doors knocked on. • Support increases for the project—polls administered before and after community meetings could capture how people’s perspective changes. • Many diverse perspectives are represented at the meetings and at community events in general. • Residents of Henderson feel more informed and engaged.
Timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Between 6 and 9 months for community meetings, depending on how presentation of the plan to the city goes. • Ongoing outreach and communication efforts.
Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Henderson Vance Downtown Development Commission • Local Foods, Local Places steering committee • Adam Foreman (Lakehouse Public Relations)
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elected officials • City staff • Vance County Department of Tourism • Vance County • Schools • Faith groups • Youth organizations (Girls & Boys Club) • YMCA
Costs and/or resources needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost and resources associated with running an outreach campaign—staff time; printing flyers and posters • Costs and resources for community meeting—venue, seating, possible refreshments
Possible funding sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Henderson-Vance Downtown Development Commission

Action 1.3: Conduct fundraising for design implementation

<p>What this is and why it is important</p>	<p>As of 2017, the city of Henderson had allocated \$20,000 to the construction of the pavilion. If no further funding is procured, construction may be limited to the pavilion. The overall site plan will require substantially more capital investment. The action plan and site design developed during the Local Foods, Local Places workshop can be used as fundraising tools to demonstrate community support for the project and the benefits of a long-term holistic approach to development at Embassy Square. City Council representatives at the workshop were particularly supportive of the site design elements that would make the project self-sustaining through public-private partnerships and entertainment-oriented retail space. Fundraising efforts can therefore include outreach to foundations, government agencies, civic groups, and private business and investors. In addition, any conversation with the UNC School of Government Development Finance Initiative about a redevelopment plan for Henderson can integrate the Local Foods, Local Places design and action plan.</p>
<p>Measures of success</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The action plan and site design are presented to the Golden Leaf Foundation, the North Carolina Community Foundation, and local civics clubs and businesses, among others. • Existing funding is leveraged for additional grants. • Civic clubs and local businesses choose to invest in the project. • Funding is made available to construct both the multi-use pavilion and the event space at the same time.
<p>Timeframe</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short term (October): More money raised for the pavilion and event space • Long term (5 years): Major funding acquired for the full site plan
<p>Lead</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carolyn Powell, Henderson-Vance Downtown Development Commission • Local Foods, Local Places steering committee
<p>Supporting cast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteers • Local, regional, state, and federal agencies • Private and nonprofit foundations • Local business and civic organizations (including anchor institutions such as Vance-Granville Community College)
<p>Costs and/or resources needed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost of promotional materials and/or graphics to use in fundraising meetings
<p>Possible funding sources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USDA Rural Development Communities Facilities Grant • USDA Agricultural Marketing Service design assistance • Rural Advancement Foundation International • North Carolina Tobacco Trust Fund Commission • North Carolina Development and Farmland Preservation Program • North Carolina Community Foundation, Vance County Chapter • Center for Environmental Farming Systems • AARP Community Challenge Grant

Other Possible Action Items Related to Goal # 1:

Below are several other potential actions identified during the Local Foods, Local Places workshop. Workshop participants considered these actions to be lower priority than those elaborated upon in the

action plan, but they are important ideas shared during the workshop and are listed here for consideration in future planning.

- Estimate costs for the pavilion and overall site construction.
- Conduct a market study for the economic viability of the retail space at the site.
- Recruit new members to the Local Foods, Local Places steering committee.

GOAL 2: Expand and sustain the mobile market to provide food access and distribution downtown

When the Henderson-Vance Downtown Development Commission applied for the Local Foods, Local Places technical assistance award, one of the priorities listed in the letter of application was to launch and sustain a fresh food distribution mechanism in downtown Henderson. Two markets already exist in Henderson—the Vance County Regional Farmers Market outside of downtown Henderson, and a pop-up mobile market at the parking lot in front of the Henderson Police Station. In 2013, the regional market opened in a state-of-the-art facility funded by a collection of public-private sources including USDA Rural Development, the Vance County Farm Bureau, and the North Carolina Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund.⁵ The pop-up mobile market is managed by the Green Rural Redevelopment Organization and is supported by the Conservation Fund, Triangle North Healthcare Foundation, and the Henderson-Vance Downtown Development Commission through October 2017. The market accepts SNAP and EBT and offers Double Bucks to increase the buying power of these programs. The Local Foods, Local Places steering committee is hoping to formalize the pop-up market into a self-sustaining, regular distributor of fresh food that serves residents in and around downtown. This community market is envisioned as a complementary and collaborative effort with the existing regional market. Establishing the market and laying the foundation for long-term, self-sustaining success was a central focus of the Local Foods, Local Places technical assistance program.

Action 2.1: Secure funding for the ongoing operations of mobile market/ downtown food distribution (PRIORITY ACTION)	
What this is and why it is important	The pop-up mobile market that currently sells produce at the parking lot in front of the police station is managed by the Green Rural Redevelopment Organization. The market has financial support committed through October 2017, and the Green Rural Redevelopment Organization is looking into how it can sustain the market beyond the 2017 season. The market serves many downtown residents, especially low-income families, that do not have access to the regional market. The downtown market also helps attract people into the downtown area, which can have spillover benefits as those visitors spend money at local businesses and restaurants. This action item involves a convening of the Henderson-Vance Downtown Development Commission; the Local Foods, Local Places steering committee; and the Green Rural Redevelopment Organization to urgently address the question of future planning and funding for the market. As a priority action, this step supports and creates momentum for the rest of the plan.

⁵ Vance County Regional Farmers Market informational brochure, <https://vance.ces.ncsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/BrochureVCRFM.pdf>. Accessed June 20, 2017.

Action 2.1: Secure funding for the ongoing operations of mobile market/ downtown food distribution (PRIORITY ACTION)

Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The pop-up market is funded beyond 2017 until it can evolve into a formal downtown farmers market. • Sufficient funding is acquired to support a market manager salary. • By 2018, the downtown farmers market is a self-sustaining enterprise with a formal management structure (a market manager and support staff or volunteers).
Timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 months: Grant funding is acquired to support the pop-up market after October 2017 and to support the launch of the downtown farmers market. • 1 – 2 years: Downtown farmers market has a long-term operating and funding plan in place.
Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Henderson-Vance Downtown Development Commission • Green Rural Redevelopment Organization • Local Foods, Local Places steering committee
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Carolina Cooperative Extension • City of Henderson • Vance County • The Conservation Fund • University of North Carolina Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention (Molly DeMarco)
Costs and/or resources needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff time: meeting, pursuing grants • Funding to support the downtown farmers market into 2018
Possible funding sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chamber of commerce, USDA Farmers Market Promotion Program, Triangle North Healthcare Foundation, city of Henderson, and Vance County.

Action 2.2: Develop an educational and promotional campaign for healthy, local food

What this is and why it is important	<p>A challenge that all communities face when developing the local food economy and addressing food access and security is how to change the culture around food purchasing and preparation. Unless healthy, local foods are affordable, quick and easy to prepare, and tasty, it is unlikely that people will shift their eating (or buying) habits. A healthy food educational program would aim to shift perceptions of and relationships to healthy produce through cooking classes, easy and quick recipes, cooking demonstrations at community events, and other useful resources that are specific to Henderson’s cultural context and translated into appropriate languages. The regional farmers market displays and distributes a useful chart of seasonal foods for North Carolina—those kinds of resources could be helpful to first-time buyers at the downtown market. The overall aim of this education program would be to address health issues in Henderson through increased healthy food consumption. This action item also calls for widening the scope of community members involved in supporting and sustaining the movement for healthy food production, distribution, and consumption in Henderson.</p>
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Action 2.2: Develop an educational and promotional campaign for healthy, local food

	Marketing techniques can include social media campaigns, promotional events, door-to-door canvassing, and radio advertisements, among others. Events that focus on local food can be particularly effective—especially if tied into existing events in Henderson such as <i>Meet Me in the Street</i> events.
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community health outcomes improve • The customer base for the downtown community market grows • Residents of Henderson and visitors engage with the local food gardens, markets, restaurants, and outlets on social media platforms – Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.
Timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 – 2 years
Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services • Henderson-Vance Downtown Development Commission • Green Rural Redevelopment Organization • Local Foods, Local Places steering committee • North Carolina Cooperative Extension Agency • City of Henderson • Vance County
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faith groups, churches • Henderson public schools • Youth organizations – 4H, Future Farmers of America • YMCA • Health care providers • Vance Granville Community College – Students could volunteer and/or intern to manage social media campaign and marketing
Costs and/or resources needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer and staff time • Cost of printing materials
Possible funding sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chamber of Commerce • Local business sponsorships • Health care providers (hospitals, clinics) • USDA Food and Nutrition Services • Educational resources are available from the 10% Campaign, a collaborative statewide initiative led by the Center for Environmental Farming Systems and North Carolina Cooperative Extension promoting locally grown and caught food, farmers and fishers, as well as the businesses and people who prepare, distribute, and sell food grown in North Carolina.⁶

⁶ The 10% Campaign. “Resources.” <http://www.nc10percent.com/resources>. Accessed Aug. 23, 2017.

Action 2.3: Conduct a community food system assessment or asset mapping

What this is and why it is important	<p>Conducting a community food system assessment or food asset mapping exercise can help Henderson understand the relationship between all parts of the city’s local food economy and where the gaps and opportunities lie. Traditionally, food assessments or asset mapping involve taking an inventory of all entities involved in food production, distribution and aggregation, processing, marketing, purchasing, preparation, value-added services, consumption, and recycling and composting. This process would help clarify and support the relationship between the downtown market and the regional market (as two key pieces of a larger food network). It would also help to identify groups and individuals throughout the food system who can participate in launching and sustaining the downtown farmers market. This process would build on the information provided in the North Carolina Food Infrastructure Inventory, updated by the North Carolina Cooperative Extension in 2017.⁷</p>
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The downtown farmers market has a clear understanding of the consumption needs of residents downtown and of the role the market plays in the wider food economy in Henderson. • The downtown farmers market partners with food producers, distributors, and businesses in Henderson to help sustain the market into the future.
Timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 months
Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Carolina Cooperative Extension • Center for Environmental Farming Systems (CEFS) • USDA Farm Service Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Rural Development
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizations that understand the local food economy and network including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ UNC Department of Health Promotion and Disease Prevention (Molly DeMarco) ○ Green Rural Redevelopment Organization ○ Local farmers, distributors, and restaurant owners • Vance County government • Soil & Water Conservation District can be involved, particularly regarding existing farm operations, prime soils, etc.
Costs and/or resources needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost of conducting assessment • Staff time

⁷ North Carolina Cooperative Extension. “NC Growing Together and Piedmont Triad Regional Council Partner on GIS Update of NC Local Infrastructure Inventory.” <https://localfood.ces.ncsu.edu/2017/07/nc-growing-together-and-piedmont-triad-regional-council-partner-on-gis-update-of-nc-local-food-infrastructure-inventory/>. Accessed Aug. 1, 2017.

Action 2.3: Conduct a community food system assessment or asset mapping

Possible funding sources

- North Carolina Cooperative Extension, North Carolina Department of Agriculture
- UNC Department of City and Regional Planning graduate students – masters planning project
- The North Carolina Agricultural Development and Farmland Development (ADFP) Trust Fund can provide funding for Vance County to conduct an ADFP Plan, which can include asset mapping. As a Tier 1 county, there are no matching requirements. The ADFP Plan could be a collaboration between the Trust Fund, the County Planning Department, The Cooperative Extension, and the Soil and Water Conservation District. Completing an ADFP Plan enhances the county’s ability to apply for funds for other agricultural development projects.⁸

Other Possible Action Items Related to Goal # 2:

Below are several other potential actions identified during the Local Foods, Local Places workshop. Workshop participants considered these actions to be lower priority than those elaborated upon in the action plan, but they are important ideas shared during the workshop process and are listed here for consideration in future planning.

- Acquire portable awnings for shade at the mobile/community market in the short term.
- Create a market exchange with other North Carolina cities to swap produce to even out supply and demand issues.
- Conduct a survey of neighborhood needs to ensure that the market addresses the needs of the community living in and around downtown.
- Partner with local health care providers to launch a produce prescription program.
- Promote the Double Bucks Program.
- Develop the capacity of hobby farmers and market gardeners who would like to scale up to sell produce to residents living downtown.

GOAL 3: Use food to build community

One of the overall goals of the Local Foods, Local Places program is to build community through food. The steering committee and workshop attendees identified this broad goal as a priority for Henderson. Using food to build community can take many different forms—from bringing people together over a meal to using urban agriculture to improve the skills of citizens and diversify the economy. Workshop attendees identified three action items that can help Henderson build community between the residents of Henderson—all of which are centered around food production, distribution, and consumption.

⁸ For more information about the ADFP Trust Fund, contact Dewitt Hardee, Program Director, at (919) 707-3069 or dewitt.hardee@ncagr.gov.

Action 3.1: Use the Local Foods, Local Places action plan to bring together the city of Henderson and Vance County around downtown economic development

What this is and why it is important	Action 1.1 outlines the need to present the site design for the vacant lot at Embassy Square to city and county officials. Action 4.1 takes this effort a step further by suggesting that the Local Foods, Local Places action plan can help bring together various stakeholders and agencies within the city of Henderson and Vance County. This action plan, focused on food, could be the trigger for a stronger, collaborative relationship between the city and county. Food is a powerful tool for bringing people together, and this applies not only to residents but also to city and county officials.
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular meetings about implementing this action plan and improving downtown take place between the city and county. • Staff from all entities commit resources to the plan implementation.
Timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 months to get commitments to participate from key staff and officials at the city and county
Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Henderson-Vance Downtown Development Commission • Local Foods, Local Places steering committee • Paul McKenzie (North Carolina Cooperative Extension)
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Henderson • Vance County • Henderson-Vance Economic Development Commission • North Carolina Cooperative Extension • The Farm Bureau
Costs and/or resources needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff time, time invested in relationship building
Possible funding sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A

Action 3.2: Create a pilot program for urban farms or community gardens on public properties

What this is and why it is important	The city of Henderson owns roughly 200 vacant lots in and around downtown. A pilot program could be launched to transform vacant lots into urban farms or community gardens, building on the urban agriculture momentum started by the Green Rural Redevelopment Organization. A vibrant network of urban farms or community gardens would serve multiple functions—it could address dilapidation and blight by transforming otherwise empty lots into a source of food and greenery, it could spur economic development through increased food production and sales (and rising property values), and it could create a sense of pride and ownership in Henderson for those community members who participate. More urban farms and gardens in Henderson could also function as a direct pipeline to the community market and could ensure a sustainable stream of vendors selling at the market.
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The framework of a program is in place. • The program is up and running. • 1 new farm is in place and is successful.

Action 3.2: Create a pilot program for urban farms or community gardens on public properties

Timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 year
Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carnell Parham (Church of God Prophecy)
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corey Williams, city of Henderson • North Carolina Cooperative Extension (Paul McKenzie and Wayne Rowland) • Green Rural Redevelopment Organization
Costs and/or resources needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff time • Money for supplies, tools, equipment, water • Local farmers and growers
Possible funding sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grant fund (North Carolina Farm Bureau) • U.S. Small Business Administration • City to lease properties to urban farmers

Action 3.3: Explore the feasibility of a community kitchen or processing facility supporting local food businesses

What this is and why it is important	<p>Community kitchens and processing facilities are high-investment resources that can be important tools in promoting local food economies, entrepreneurship, and food access and security. A feasibility study would assess the viability of a community kitchen or processing center near the Embassy Square district. If viable, the investment could allow local growers and farmers to scale up, increase revenue generation, and reduce food waste. A couple of local organizations and institutions (The Church of God Prophecy and the Area Christians Together on Service [ACTS]) have shown interest in hosting a food resource such as a kitchen or processing facility at their sites.</p>
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feasibility study complete – understand whether the project is financially feasible and where the ideal is space is downtown
Timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18 months to conduct feasibility analysis • Long term: fund and construct a community kitchen or processing facility in Henderson
Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paul McKenzie (North Carolina Cooperative Extension)
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carnell Parham (Church of God Prophecy) • Local farmers • USDA Rural Development • Area Christians Together on Service [ACTS]
Costs and/or resources needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff time • Consultant fee (\$60,000 +/- for feasibility assessment) • High capital cost of actual construction
Possible funding sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate grants and loans from nonprofit organizations, such as the Golden LEAF Foundation, and from government agencies including USDA Rural Development

Other Possible Action Items Related to Goal # 3:

Below are several other potential actions identified during the Local Foods, Local Places workshop. Workshop participants considered these actions to be lower priority than those elaborated upon in the action plan, but they are important ideas shared during the workshop and are listed here for consideration in future planning.

- Shift decision making and habits around food from fast, processed food to fresh, local food through subsidies and other mechanisms.
- Partner with the UNC Department of Health Promotion and Disease Prevention (Molly DeMarco) on some of the food initiatives outlined in the Local Foods, Local Places action plan.

Long Term Revitalization Goal: Connect People to Downtown

Downtown Henderson is in the midst of a slow but steady revitalization. The central city has a number of assets including the Embassy Square development, the iconic clock tower, attractive historic architecture and buildings, and an active downtown development commission. About 1,500 people work in downtown Henderson, employed predominantly by city and county government and small businesses. However, downtown Henderson still faces some challenges including vacancy, dilapidation, and perceptions of crime. As a result, further efforts are needed to attract people downtown to live, work, and play. These efforts could target longtime residents of Henderson who do not have an existing culture of going downtown for recreation, tourists visiting the region, passersby driving along the interstate, and potential seniors and young families who could choose downtown Henderson as a place to settle down. The action items towards this goal that were developed by community members during the workshop are listed below. A full description of the priority actions is provided in **Appendix G: Long Term Actions for Connecting People to Downtown**.

Actions:

- Explore the feasibility new rail trail between Henderson and Oxford.
- Develop a branding campaign for downtown Henderson.
- Increase the promotion of downtown Henderson's assets through the Vance County Department of Tourism.
- Create downtown walking tours.
- Commission murals and public art (for resources see: North Carolina Folk Life Institute, State Wide Arts Foundation (Joselyn), Local Arts Council, Local Artists and community college).
- Provide pedestrian seating, shade trees, and other amenities along key corridors downtown.
- Create walking signs for downtown wayfinding that indicate how long it would take to walk to key attractions in the downtown area.
- Meet with Kinston to talk about how they brought about their success (Adam Short, Planning Director of Kinston). The Development Finance Initiative through UNC's School of Government has also worked in Kinston and could provide information about applicable lessons for Henderson.

Implementation and Next Steps

Three post-workshop conference calls were held during June, July, and August 2017, following the workshop. The calls were held with the Local Foods, Local Places steering committee and a few 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:

- On June 9, 2017, The Henderson Dispatch—a local news publication—ran an article about the workshop entitled “Envisioning Change.” The article covered how the workshop process and content. It ended with a quote from a local steering committee member saying “I think this has been absolutely wonderful. It was energizing and there was this feeling of people wanting something to happen in Henderson,” Crews said. “To see a printed picture of what could be in Henderson was just amazing.”
- The Henderson Downtown Development Commission applied for the AARP Community Challenge Grant to help fund construction of a pavilion at Embassy Square.

Appendices

- Appendix A – Community Data Profile
- Appendix B – Workshop Participants and Contact List
- Appendix C – Workshop Photo Album
- Appendix D – Workshop Feedback and Documentation
- Appendix E – Funding Resources
- Appendix F – References
- Appendix G – Long Term Actions for Connecting People to Downtown Henderson