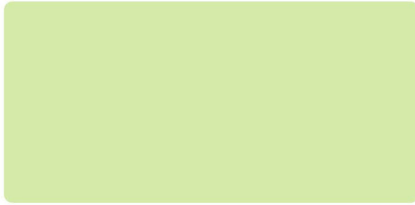
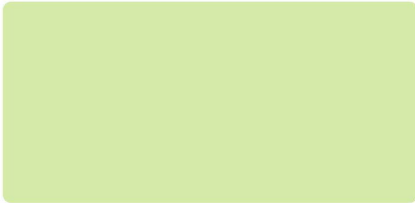


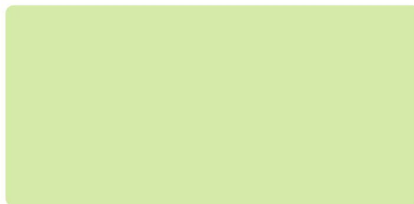
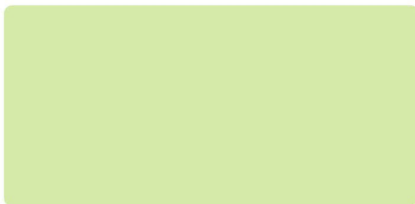
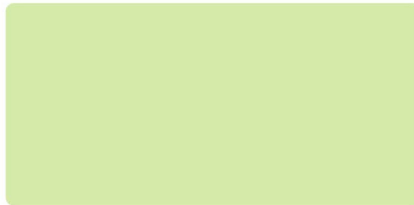


LOCAL FOODS, LOCAL PLACES

Technical Assistance Program



Local Foods, Local Places
Community Action Plan
for Whitesville,
West Virginia
November 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

The Town of Whitesville, West Virginia, is a small community of 466 residents located in the heart of central Appalachian coal country. Rich in Appalachian tradition and culture, Whitesville has its eye on the future. Once a thriving coal town filled with commerce and activity, Whitesville is now planning—and implementing—a path towards a reinvention of what small rural towns are and will become while maintaining its sense of place, history, and community.



Figure 1 – Whitesville, Christmas Parade, Circa 1950.
Image Credit: Town of Whitesville

As mining grew in the early 1900's, mines in and around Whitesville supported thousands of miners, with eleven coal companies located along the Coal River. Whitesville was formally incorporated in 1935, quickly growing to accommodate the influx of coal companies and coal-related jobs. The railroad was a major factor in growing the coal industry, attracting workers from all over the world, creating a unique melting pot of cultures. Businesses began to spring up quickly; numerous restaurants, movie theaters, bars, hotels, gas stations, and car dealerships began to flourish, contributing to a vibrant and strong community that many residents fondly recall today. Rosalie Averson—who attended the workshop—has written many memoirs about her life in Whitesville since 1949, recalling how wonderful it was, especially during the Christmas parade (Figure 1).

The boom and bust cycle of the coal industry took its toll on Whitesville's stability. As mechanization and a shift in energy sources began in the 1950's, coal saw a rapid and deep decline, with only one mine operating in the valley by 1958, creating an out migration of residents seeking employment. While demand for coal would ebb and flow through the decades, it never returned to a level that supported growth and prosperity in Whitesville. The recent Upper Big Branch mining disaster has also left its mark on Whitesville's history. On April 5, 2010, a massive coal-dust explosion in a nearby mine killed 29 miners in one of the worst mining disasters in history. The resilient town of Whitesville came together to support the community members through this crisis and formed the Upper Big Branch Memorial Group. Established in 2011, the group raised funds to build a permanent remembrance to honor the fallen miners. In 2012, the Upper Big Branch Miners Memorial was built and dedicated, serving as an honorarium for all who were killed by the disaster (Figure 2).



Figure 2 – Upper Big Branch Miners Memorial, Image Credit: Upper Big Branch Memorial Group

As central Appalachian coal continues to decline, towns such as Whitesville have begun to think about what a transition looks like and how to progress against stifling economic odds. West Virginia lost nearly 7,000 mining jobs in 2011, with Boone County alone losing over 2,000 jobs, representing a 58 percent

loss of employment since 2011. This tops the nation in coal mine job losses by a county. Lost jobs and decreased coal production amount to a decline in tax revenue for the county which, in turn, drastically reduces services for residents. With a median household income \$24,375— compared to West Virginia median of \$41,751— and a poverty rate over 16 percent, more than 4 percent higher than the national average, Whitesville has more than its share of economic woes. In addition, food insecurity and access is a major issue facing Whitesville, which has limited availability to nutritionally adequate and safe foods and limited access to supermarkets or other sources of healthy and affordable food.

As visible through a surge of community engagement, Whitesville continues to build capacity to meet these bleak conditions head-on. Following the completion of the miner's memorial, the Upper Big Branch Memorial Group wanted to continue to bring the community of Whitesville together and focus on the betterment of the community. The Upper Big Branch Memorial Group has pursued the idea of rediscovering Whitesville to an inspiring level. Focusing on heritage and recreation tourism, the group has completed a series of projects to highlight the town's history, improve the quality of life for residents, and attract visitors from across the region. In 2013, the Coal Heritage Riverwalk Park was launched with hopes to attract the coal-related tourism in southern West Virginia. Completed in 2014 (Figure 3), the park offers public gathering space and a stage that hosts a variety of events and festivals. The Riverwalk Park was designed to showcase the rich history of mining. Among the design touches to accent this goal are a façade of a company store on the stage, picnic pavilion roofs in the style of coal camp buildings, and period style lamp-posts throughout. A restored caboose, which opened 2016 as a historical exhibit, acts as a central attraction (Figure 4).



Figure 3 – Two pictures of the Coal Heritage Riverwalk Park. Credit: EPA



Figure 4 – Coal Heritage Riverwalk. Credit: EPA

The Upper Big Branch Memorial Group has now set its sights on the redevelopment of a vacant building in town, a former Family Dollar store. Located on the south side town along Route 3, the building offers a larger parking lot and nearly 50,000 square feet of building space. Vacant for over 5 years, the Upper Big Branch Memorial Group would like to see this building be developed into a multi-use/multi-tenant building for a variety of services generally oriented around goals of place-making and supporting local foods. Residents believe this space is an ideal gateway opportunity for redeveloping Whitesville for the benefit of citizens and visitors alike.

In 2016, the town of Whitesville requested assistance through the Local Foods, Local Places program to develop an action plan for promoting their local food system and becoming a healthier, more walkable and economically vibrant community. 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, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the U.S. Department of Transportation, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Appalachian Regional Commission, and the Delta Regional Authority. Whitesville was one of 24 communities across the United States selected to participate in the program in 2017.

The West Virginia Community Development Hub partnered with the Upper Big Branch Memorial Group to create a steering committee that identified primary goals for the technical assistance (Figure 5). These goals include better coordination among local and regional efforts, with specific attention to low-cost, citizen-led efforts—especially nutrition education and the need to support the local economy. Additionally, the West Virginia Community Development Hub wanted to generate greater

LOCAL FOODS, LOCAL PLACES STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

- Wanna Buzzard, Gardener, Red Cross/Medical Reserve Corps for Boone County
- Sheila Combs, President, Upper Big Branch Mining Memorial Group, Inc
- Heather Cook, WVU Extension Agent, Logan County
- Jodi Cooper, Mama Jo's Cupboard & Bees
- Kate Greene, Redevelopment Programs Manager, Northern West Virginia Brownfields Assistance Center, WVU
- Ann Kelly, Whitesville Soup Kitchen/Nurse
- Steve McGraw, Owner, Roadside Produce business/ farmer's markets
- Chris Prater, Town Clerk, Whitesville
- David Richmond, WVU Extension Agent, Raleigh County
- Marsha Shonk, VISTA for the Town of Whitesville (point of contact for workshop)
- Shae Strait, Project Manager, Northern West Virginia Brownfields Assistance Center, WVU
- Darynann Washington, Coordinator, Family Resource Network and Stopwatch for Boone County
- Amanda Workman, West Virginia Community Development Hub/Volunteer of the Bridgeport Farmer's Market
- Debbie Hon, The Health Plan, Medicaid Regional Community Engagement Specialist

Figure 5 – Local Foods, Local Places steering committee in Whitesville, West Virginia.

interdependence between the rural and urban areas of the county through increased attention to the social, cultural, economic, and environmental opportunities afforded by local foods and placemaking efforts.

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. Over the course of three planning calls and workshop discussions, the community's goals evolved from those in the initial request for technical assistance to the three shown later in this report. They reflect the holistic, collaborative approach to community development already underway in Whitesville, West Virginia.

Engagement

The technical assistance engagement process for Local Foods, Local Places has three phases, illustrated in Figure 6 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.

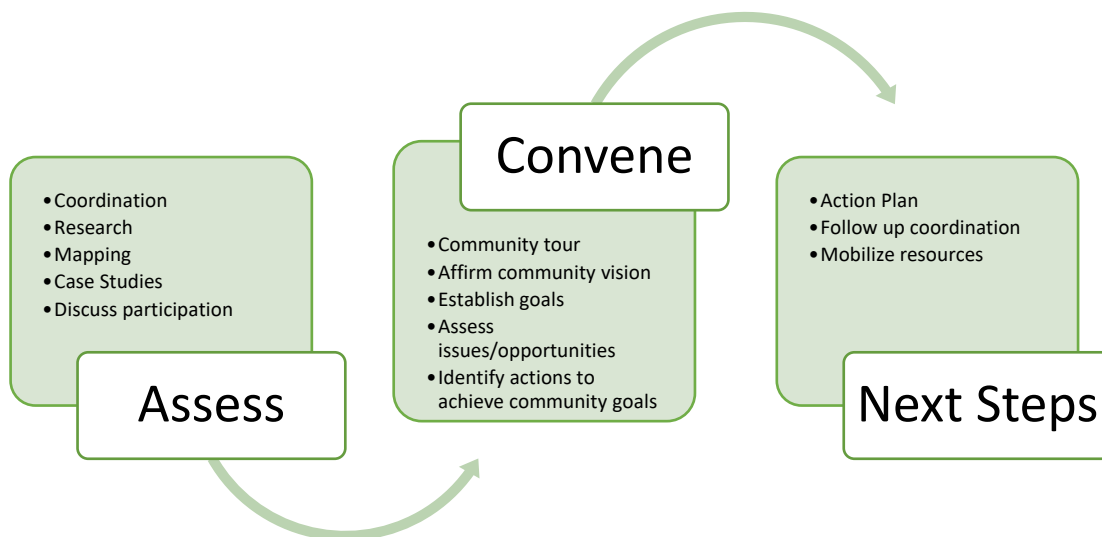


Figure 6 - Local Foods, Local Places Technical Assistance Process Diagram

The community workshop was held on August 15-16, 2017. It included a small dinner and lunch gathering with the steering committee members and federal partners, a tour of the community, and an evening community meeting at the Salmey Building on Day 1 and an action-planning session, also at Salmey Building on Day 2. The workshop sign-in sheets are provided in **Appendix A**.

Community Tour

The Local Foods, Local Places steering committee organized a potluck dinner on August 15 with key stakeholders at the Salmey Building to introduce the project to the technical assistance team consisting of consultants and federal agency representatives. Prior to the pot-luck dinner, the steering committee led a tour of key places and projects in the Whitesville area including the Coal Heritage Riverwalk Park, the vacant Family Dollar building (Figure 7), an under-construction city building, a walk down main street including a stop at the Shoppes in the Ville, home to Bad Dog Graphix and several other businesses, a tour of the Upper Big Branch Miners Memorial, and the proposed river access point. The tour provided an overview of Whitesville’s challenges and opportunities and allowed for informal discussions about the local food system and place-making efforts. Photos from some of the locations toured are available in **Appendix B**.



Figure 7 – Family Dollar. Image Credit: EPA.

Vision and Values

The workshop was attended by 5-10 residents and 10-20 state and federal agency representatives. During the community meeting on August 15 and 16, the technical assistance team facilitated a series of exercises that captured the group’s aspirations for the future of Whitesville and their understanding of the current challenges and opportunities relating to the town’s 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 Whitesville can be...*”. This exercise captured how residents feel about their community and the role that local foods or place-making can play in Whitesville’s future (Figure 8). Next, community members were asked to write a newspaper headline about something positive happening in Whitesville 10 years in the future. Finally, participants used index cards to outline the challenges in achieving their vision and opportunities that can help Whitesville overcome those barriers (Figure 9). The participant responses are presented in full in **Appendix C**.



This I believe about Whitesville...

- It’s a friendly, caring, and welcoming community.
- It’s a beautiful place—West Virginia’s best kept secret.
- We are no longer looking backwards. We’re changing the mindset to focus on a different future and reinvent ourselves. The future is ours.
- It’s a passionate and hardworking community with people wanting to make a difference.
- It’s a vibrant tourist destination based on the cultural and natural assets of the town and region.
- There is a strong local community with a high quality of life for all; present and future.
- Whitesville has thriving local businesses, driven by hardworking and creative entrepreneurs and supported by the community.

Figure 8 – A sampling of workshop participants’ beliefs about Whitesville.

The visioning exercises revealed many of the group’s aspirations for economic revitalization, community development, improved health, entrepreneurship opportunities afforded by local products, community pride, increased coordination among partner organizations, and the enhancement of heritage-based tourism. 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. 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 of case studies by the consultant team that discussed a small town’s effort to create a community grocery, a viable agricultural social enterprise in the coalfield of West Virginia, a successful local foods market, and other food system-related technical information.

Action Plan

The culminating product of the workshop is a community action plan. The plan is organized around three 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, and some data are available in **Appendix F**.

GOAL 1: Build partnerships and training programs to increase food, hospitality, and tourism-related economic development opportunities.

The untapped potential of increased tourism, recreation, and adventure-related businesses was a major topic of discussion at the workshop. The possibility of the Hatfield-McCoy trail expansion to Whitesville, with a go/no-go decision pending this fall, will potentially bring with it any number of business opportunities. Even if the Hatfield-McCoy trail does not get expanded to Whitesville, the Coal River Trail and other recreation (ATV) trails have the potential to attract and bring visitors and other economic opportunities to the town. Efforts are also underway to create a rail-to-trail project in the Whitesville region. Additionally, a business assessment study is in the process of being completed for the town of Whitesville. This assessment will explore Whitesville’s potential and existing tourism products, services, and components; conduct a gap analysis to discern missing links in the town’s tourism infrastructure; and identify needs, opportunities, and recommendations to fill those gaps. The assessment will be research-driven and specific to business opportunities in Whitesville. The community has planned a fall

ASSETS AND BARRIERS

ASSETS:

- People and ideas; community capital; working together
- Leadership team
- Natural assets and tourism opportunities (river, trails, culture, etc.)
- Regional support
- Grants, investments, and programs
- A new vision for the future

BARRIERS:

- Struggling and transitioning economy
- Resistance to change, living in the past
- Population loss; aging population
- Ownership, risk aversion, and lack community collaboration
- Lack of tourism infrastructure (lodging, restaurants, stores)

Figure 9 – Workshop participants’ summarized thoughts on the challenges and opportunities present in the local food system and downtown revitalization efforts.

kickoff event hosted by the West Virginia Community Development Hub, through their Communities of Achievement Program (HubCAP)—a coaching program for towns in West Virginia—and the Northern Brownfields Assistance Center. This event will provide an opportunity to engage the community and share some community “wins” and the initial market research outlining economic opportunities. Hopefully, this report and event will help the community better understand and realize its “untapped” potential by identifying new business concepts, as well as ones that complement existing businesses; and consider how to expand tourism services and amenities through rentals, hospitality, and food retail.

The actions outlined below are intended to help Whitesville and the surrounding communities work together to better understand, prepare, take action, and form partnerships necessary to make the most of these emerging opportunities.

Action 1.1: Implement a small business entrepreneurship training program.	
What this is and why it is important	<p>Entrepreneurial technical support is very important to help people prepare for specific economic opportunities identified in the market and background research being conducted as part of the business assessment study described in Goal 1.</p> <p>The HubCAP program is designed to take communities to the next level in their community development efforts. The program works with communities to identify a project in their development plan to complete over the course of 23 months. Specifically for Whitesville, the HubCAP program will develop training for starting or expanding a business, support existing businesses with financial, coaching, and technical assistance. Local food and tourism-related trainings such as building and maintaining hoop houses; creating value-added food products; marketing businesses related to the motorcycle trail, water trail, and ATV trails; and financial management for any type of business were all mentioned.</p>
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of current and potential business owners who speak at the Oct. 19th kickoff • Number of connection points (calls, presentations, meetings) through the HubCAP coaching program or any other provider • Future planning or development of new business in Whitesville
Timeframe	The HubCap program started fall 2017. Tracking and implementation will happen over the course of the next year. Beginning now, timeframe to be determined.
Lead	Kaycie (West Virginia Community Development Hub) and Kate (Northern Brownfields Assistance Center) and Whitesville core group

Action 1.1: Implement a small business entrepreneurship training program.	
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small Business Development Center – Matt Cummings • West Virginia Hive- Ruthanna Beezley • Coal River Group – Bill Currey • Kristina Oliver could be approached about developing a Whitesville-specific curriculum (Start at October event) • West Virginia Department of Agriculture • Refresh Appalachia • Greenbrier Valley Grown
Costs and/or resources needed	Local entrepreneurs could utilize the soup kitchen as a commercial kitchen. The site could offer business training and support for a variety of value-added projects—this is future idea not for business expo
Possible funding sources	Northern Brownfields Assistance Center and West Virginia Community Development Hub

Action 1.2: Organize community activities/events that can mobilize local youth and tap into Whitesville’s history and culture to further economic opportunities.	
What this is and why it is important	Increasing local ownership and involvement in making change happen, especially amongst youth, is a strong need for the future of the town. Events and outreach through social media, newsletters, etc., are important for creating and sustaining positive momentum. It’s important to organize events and engage youth through targeted outreach. Having a media and event outreach plan with specifics such as frequency and timing of events and outreach, will help the community build a narrative around how their efforts build on one another. Specifically, develop an engagement plan through the Upper Big Branch Memorial Group who will work with existing groups and organizations to see that youth orientated events happen on a regular basis.
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific, targeted, youth engagement plan • The number of new attendees at events • Number of new additions to task teams and HubCAP core team
Timeframe	Immediate and on-going. Will do outreach at October 19 th kickoff.
Lead	Upper Big Branch Memorial Group
Supporting cast	Technical assistance providers (economic and business support), West Virginia Community Development Hub, Girl Scout/brownies, newly formed 4-H group
Costs and/or resources needed	VISTA, Upper Big Branch Memorial Group, town council, and businesses
Possible funding sources	HubCAP, Northern Brownfields Assistance Center, Appalachian Regional Commission Local Foods, Local Places implementation funds

Action 1.3: Continue improving the Coal River Heritage RiverWalk Park and developing other public spaces that improve quality of life and encourage tourism.	
What this is and why it is important	Many of these improvements are planned and the work is on-going. This action is important as it builds on previous efforts to enhance local assets, develop public space, and cultivate amenities in Whitesville that are attractive and enjoyable to the community and visitors and draw attention to the river resources. Improved public space and community amenities will increase foot traffic downtown and build on existing investments made in this area.
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed renovation of the former police building • Completed installation of the boat ramp and river trail signage • More river use; increased visitors; more events held • Funds procured for Wi-fi and “eyes on the river” camera installed
Timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building renovation by end of 2017 • Boat ramp and signage in early 2018
Lead	Upper Big Branch Memorial Group
Supporting cast	Big Coal River Group, West Virginia Division of Natural Resources, Boone County Community Foundation, local volunteers, DBP, Boy Scouts
Costs and/or resources needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building renovation: \$30,000 • River access: \$10,000 • Kitchen renovation: \$7,500
Possible funding sources	Boone County grant; West Virginia Community Development Hub – TTTA mini grants; Alpha Natural Resources; local donors; West Virginia Division of Natural Resources; Coal River Group grants; ARC Local Foods, Local Places implementation funds

GOAL 2: Produce a community-supported plan for the former Family Dollar property.

Much of the optimism in the community is centered on the potential of redeveloping the former Family Dollar property in such a way that benefits the community. The original discussions around its re-use were inspired by the Capital Market in Charleston, which is a vendor space. The group brainstormed a number of ideas, recognizing that there are plans in the works for a private entrepreneur to open a grocery/deli business in downtown Whitesville within the next year. There was consensus that any re-use of the dollar store building and property should be careful not to compete with the recently opened grocery/deli venture. At a brainstorming session, several ideas were presented, including:

- Local vendors’ market with stalls or office space for small retail or start-up businesses.
- Flexible community space for community programming and other activities.
- Food aggregation or distribution space for Refresh Appalachia that could supply the grocery or other local food retail or businesses.
- Space for value-added food production or processing.

The property itself has many pros and cons. It is a flat, sizable, highly visible piece of land in a prominent gateway location. Its adjacency to churches and senior housing make it walkable and accessible to community functions and people in need. Though it is not downtown, it is an anchor location for that

end of town, and if the sidewalks are completed and improved, it could be accessible to the Upper Big Branch Memorial Park, elementary school, and residential areas of town. Some drainage issues were identified as a problem, and the building's condition is deteriorating quickly. Though many ideas were raised, the most immediate need was to engage people in more conversation about the possibilities and potential for this property and then identify steps to assess and acquire the property.

Action 2.1: Develop a community vision for the potential use of the former Family Dollar property.	
What this is and why it is important	Before the building can be acquired or feasibility studies can be performed, there must be a comprehensive, community-supported vision for the use of the building. Many ideas were proposed during the Local Foods, Local Places workshop as described above. The community engagement process could begin with proposing those potential uses to other community members to gain support and garner excitement around the possibility of acquiring the building. It is important for this process to identify both short-term and long-term opportunities and visions for the building.
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A community-supported vision of what the building should be used for and an action plan for moving forward with that idea • A documented explanation of the goals for the use of the building • Up to 10 community members at three meetings / engagements • Input from community members through surveys
Timeframe	3-6 months
Lead	Upper Big Branch Memorial Group to lead with support from others on the Local Foods, Local Places steering committee who want to be involved
Supporting cast	Town residents, town council, business owners, core team, West Virginia HubCAP
Costs and/or resources needed	Meeting space, printed materials (if surveying), volunteer time
Possible funding sources	Appalachian Regional Commission Flex-E planning grant and Local Foods, Local Places implementation funds

Action 2.2: Perform a feasibility study on potential uses of the building identified in a community visioning process.	
What this is and why it is important	<p>After a community-supported vision is identified for the building and site, further study will be needed to understand what specific uses will be feasible at the property. These studies could be divided into multiple actions, such as:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Feasibility of the vision for the property, the business plan for property reuse, and recommendations for ownership, management, and operations. 2) Preliminary engineering and architectural report for renovations/construction, including possible funding sources <p>A business plan should be developed that assesses the feasibility of the vision and has a sustainable financial model for operation.</p>
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feasibility assessment and business plan created: feasibility studies completed • Specific use(s) determined to be feasible (with specific action items identified for implementation, costs associated with uses, and identification of prospective ownership) • Business recruitment plan developed
Timeframe	1 year – 18 months
Lead	Upper Big Branch Memorial Group along with interested Local Foods, Local Places steering committee members.
Supporting cast	West Virginia Community Development Hub – coordination/time, consultant group completing the feasibility studies
Costs and/or resources needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultant fee for preparation of assessments • Northern Brownfields Assistance Center – Phase I environmental review
Possible funding sources	ARC implementation assistance; technical assistance funds through HubCAP program, Northern Brownfields Assistance Center

Action 2.3: Pursue and obtain ownership of former Family Dollar property.	
What this is and why it is important	The building must be acquired to provide programming/needed uses to the community and visitors and ultimately spur additional economic development in Whitesville. It’s also important to secure the building and prevent any further fall into decay or disrepair.
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building acquired – (title/deed/keys) prior to roof caving in. • Ribbon-cutting, grand opening • Operations and business plan implemented • Multiple programming and services provided consistently over time
Timeframe	18 months – 2 years

Action 2.3: Pursue and obtain ownership of former Family Dollar property.	
Lead	Upper Big Branch/Sheila to coordinate with Local Foods, Local Places steering committee and building owner to find an appropriate solution and local owner.
Supporting cast	Town Council, Upper Big Branch Memorial Group
Costs and/or resources needed	\$100-\$120,000 is the approximate current listing price of the building.
Possible funding sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore possibility of Family Dollar donating for tax purposes? • Reach out to local community development and private foundations (coal companies, trucking companies, etc. that are sometimes willing to provide community investment)

GOAL 3: Improve key infrastructure, connectivity, and beautification needs to allow Whitesville to prosper and position it for economic growth.

Whitesville’s recent history has been marked by enthusiasm for and progress towards improving the town’s future. Many people have taken it upon themselves to fix their properties and make them more attractive. The Upper Big Branch Memorial Park is a refreshing site compared to the vacant overgrown lots that preceded it. The Shoppes in the Ville, spearheaded by the Bad Dog Graphix silk screening company, is another sign of do-it-yourself entrepreneurship. Despite all this, a great many buildings, public spaces, sidewalks, and other infrastructure in Whitesville are in need of improvement. Buildings that sit vacant fall into further disrepair as vegetation grows, and water infiltrates roofs and interiors, further compromising the structures.

Action 3.1: Coordinate with the Boone County comprehensive planning process, ensuring Whitesville’s vision and goals align with existing regional comprehensive plans and strategies.	
What this is and why it is important	Utilize the BAD Buildings report and other planning efforts in Whitesville to align the vision and goals with the regional comprehensive plan for Boone County. It is important to be able to utilize resources effectively and efficiently and collaborate with county planning officials, leveraging resources. The county comprehensive plan will help identify properties and buildings for best use, practices to promote economic growth, and a plan for the future that aligns development with the community’s vision.
Measures of success	A Boone County Comprehensive Plan that aligns with existing Whitesville BAD Buildings report and other plans for building infrastructure redevelopment planning.
Timeframe	Comprehensive plan completed within a year
Lead	Whitesville Town Council
Supporting cast	Whitesville Town Council, Boone County Commission, West Virginia University Land Use Clinic, West Virginia Hub

Costs and/or resources needed	West Virginia University Land Use Clinic services and county planner
Possible funding sources	N/A

Action 3.2: Complete tear down and renovation of Big Star site.

What this is and why it is important	A great many buildings, public spaces, sidewalks, and other infrastructure in Whitesville are in need of improvement. Buildings that sit vacant fall into further disrepair as vegetation grows, and water infiltrates roofs and interiors further compromising the structures. These buildings are eyesores and safety hazards for residents and barriers to spurring development. This site could be a catalyst for reinvention (i.e., green space central to Whitesville). The Big Star site is in severe disrepair and presents a health and safety hazard for the community.
Measures of success	Building and construction waste disappears at the Big Star site
Timeframe	6 months – one year for demolition, clean up, and post-demolition use
Lead	VISTA (Marsha Shonk), Northern Brownfields Assistance Center, Amanda Workman
Supporting cast	Town of Whitesville Redevelopment Committee, adjoining land owners, partner agencies
Costs and/or resources needed	\$180,000
Possible funding sources	Northern Brownfields Assistance Center, town, county, state, EPA Brownfields Assistance and Clean up grants, other federal agencies

Action 3.3: Upgrade and complete all sidewalk infrastructure to improve connectivity and walkability in Whitesville.

What this is and why it is important	Accessibility, safety, and public health are top concerns. Safe sidewalks are needed for all people, but especially for seniors and children to be able to travel up and down the main street, to schools, parks, businesses, and homes. Whitesville is not very big, but there are big gaps in pedestrian infrastructure that once completed will make the town a more enjoyable place to get out of a car for both visitors and residents.
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved accessibility, safety • Increased use of sidewalks
Timeframe	Immediate to 1 year
Lead	city council and appointed representative
Supporting cast	Whitesville redevelopment, school district, Mountain Terrace Apartments, veterans association (American Legion), HUD, West Virginia DOH, Congressman Jenkins

Action 3.3: Upgrade and complete all sidewalk infrastructure to improve connectivity and walkability in Whitesville.

Costs and/or resources needed	TBD depending on chosen improvements
Possible funding sources	West Virginia DOH, HUD (CDBG), West Virginia University Extension, Downstream Strategies, Main Street Program

Implementation and Next Steps

Three post-workshop conference calls were held from August to October 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:

Scout building renovation: The Upper Big Branch Memorial Group has received a grant in the amount of \$7,500 to continue work on the scout building that should allow for the installation of a functional kitchen, new flooring, and interior doors. Any remainder will be used to purchase tables. Work began in mid-September 2017.

United Way Day of Caring: The Day of Caring was completed on September 20th. A team of 25 people, led by Local Foods, Local Places steering committee members, cleaned the river from one end of town to the other removing a truckload of debris. A team of retired miners weeded and trimmed the landscaping from the Upper Big Branch Memorial Plaza through the Coal Heritage RiverWalk.

River access: The Upper Big Branch Memorial Group and other Local Foods, Local Places steering committee members are working with Bill Curry and the Coal River Group to complete the river access and parking area. They estimate that the project could be completed with \$8,000. This includes building a rock base road to the river’s edge, a parking area at the top, a fishing platform near the top, and benches. They are also willing to help with some additional funding if necessary. The Upper Big Branch Memorial Group currently has a \$2,500 mini grant to apply to this project.

Family Dollar real estate assessment: Members of the Upper Big Branch Memorial Group have been in contact with the real estate agent representing the vacant Family Dollar property as well as Congressman Evan Jenkins's office. Congressman Jenkins indicated they could send a letter of support.

Appalachian Regional Commission Implementation Assistance

The Appalachian Regional Commission is making available to each of the Local Foods, Local Places communities in its service area implementation funding assistance of up to \$20,000 per community. The funding is intended for specific actions identified in the workshop and post-workshop action planning effort. The community identified the following action items for this funding assistance.

- Completion of the Scout Building renovation (identified in Action 1.3) to include: two new windows, shelving, storage, lighting, hood and exhaust fan in kitchen, hot water tank, trim, two office chairs, and wi-fi service. The Upper Big Branch Memorial Group will provide office space for Marsha Shonk, AmeriCorps Vista for the Whitesville area. She will be able to maintain a community presence and be a contact for future community projects.

Local Foods, Local Places Technical Assistance Workshop

- Organization and implementation of food and tourism-related community events (identified in Action 1.2) to include: development of a farmers and vendors market in the Spring of 2018; community events promoting outdoor recreation tourism such as the Trout Rodeo; and other seasonal events that further community engagement. In addition, the renovated building and surrounding RiverWalk Park will be utilized by the recently-instituted Whitesville 4-H program to promote agricultural education for the local youth.

Appendices

- Appendix A – Workshop Sign-in Sheets
- Appendix B – Workshop Photo Album
- Appendix C – Workshop Exercise Results
- Appendix D – Funding Resources
- Appendix E – References
- Appendix F – Community Data Profile