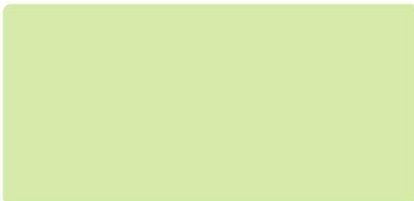
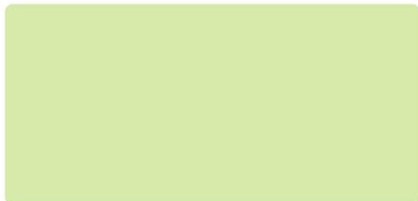
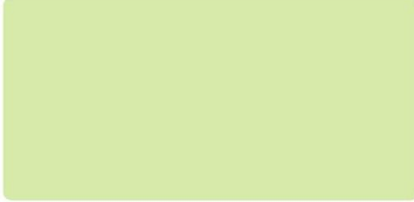
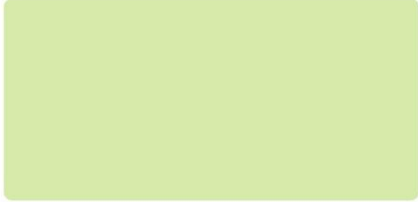




LOCAL FOODS, LOCAL PLACES

Technical Assistance Program



Strengthening the
Local Foods System:
Actions and Strategies
for Barbourville, KY

September 15, 2015



Community Story

Barbourville is a small city of just over 3,000 people in Knox County, located in the historic Cumberland Gap area of southeastern Kentucky. The city is surrounded by hills on all sides and retains the same basic street layout design that was initially planned in 1801.

The area is rich in historical significance. It is well known for the first Civil War battle in Kentucky that took place on the present site of Union College (founded in 1879), the oldest college in the Appalachian Mountains. Barbourville is additionally known for its Daniel Boone Festival and plentiful natural and recreational amenities such as the nearby Cumberland Falls State Resort Park and Daniel Boone National Forest.

Many communities in southeastern Kentucky are currently transitioning from a coal-based economy to a more diverse future. Agriculture is an important contributor to the local economy and the region's farmers produce a wide variety of crops and livestock. The Knox County Farmers' Market has stimulated agricultural interest in the area by providing opportunities for local farmers and vendors as well as providing access to fresh and healthy produce to consumers.

The Knox County Farmers' Market had its first season in 2014, operating at a local attorney's parking lot off of Old 25 East. Since then, the Farmers' Market has grown tremendously and has relocated to the Knox County Extension Office parking lot off Treuhaft Boulevard. The market is open every Thursday from 5-8:00pm, May through October. The Knox County Farmers' Market Board wants to take their operations to the next level, including goals to open a year-round market as well as starting up a mobile farmers market. This desire to boost the local food economy led to the community's application for technical assistance from the federal Local Foods, Local Places program¹.



Figure 1 – Union College (Source: Washington Monthly); Downtown Barbourville Courthouse (Source: US EPA), and Daniel Boone Mural on Downtown Building (Source: Renaissance Planning)

¹ http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/announcement_-_local_foods_local_places_2014_final.pdf
<http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/sp-local-foods-local-places.html>

Engagement

Union College and the City of Barbourville hosted a small team of federal agency staff and consultants for a two day Local Foods, Local Places workshop on June 16-17, 2015 to develop a strategic work plan, roles, and responsibilities for the City of Barbourville and the Knox County Farmers' Market. The workshop included representatives from the Knox County Farmers' Market, City Hall, Grow Appalachia/Lend-A-Hand Center, Union College, Kentucky Innovation Center, Knox County Extension Office, Barbourville Tourism, Mountain Advocate, and local farmers. Federal agencies participating in the workshop included the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).



Figure 2 – Day One Workshop Participants (Source: US EPA)

The workshop began with a tour at Union College and a discussion of the important role that Union holds as an anchor institution in Barbourville. The presence of the college is integral to the social, cultural, and economic wellbeing of the community. Union College understands that their success is closely tied to the fortune of the neighborhoods around them. As such, they are working to expand their efforts to engage with partners such as the Knox County Farmers' Market in an effort to improve the livability and wellbeing of Barbourville. The tour then proceeded to the town square where workshop participants learned about the history of businesses and buildings located in downtown Barbourville. From there, the tour moved to the Barbourville Community Garden site, the former Farmers' Market site at the attorney's office, and finally to the Knox County Extension Office site where the Farmers' Market is currently held. Those visits were followed by visioning, brainstorming, and action-planning discussions among a diverse group of citizens and local, state and federal stakeholders. These discussions helped participants identify the community values underlying their local food initiatives and identify strategies to continue to grow their seasonal farmers market, create a mobile market, and continue to expand the role of local food in the region's economy. These discussions also clarified how local foods can help make Barbourville and the Knox County region healthier, more resilient, and economically vibrant by further developing and showcasing the regional food culture. Participants identified obstacles to, and solutions for, expanding access to local foods and created the action plan described in this document.

The overall technical assistance process conducted for Local Foods, Local Places has three phases. The community tour and the two-day workshop fall within the second phase of this assistance. A set of conference calls, both prior to and following the workshop, are also conducted. The graphic below (Figure 3) illustrates the three technical assistance phases.

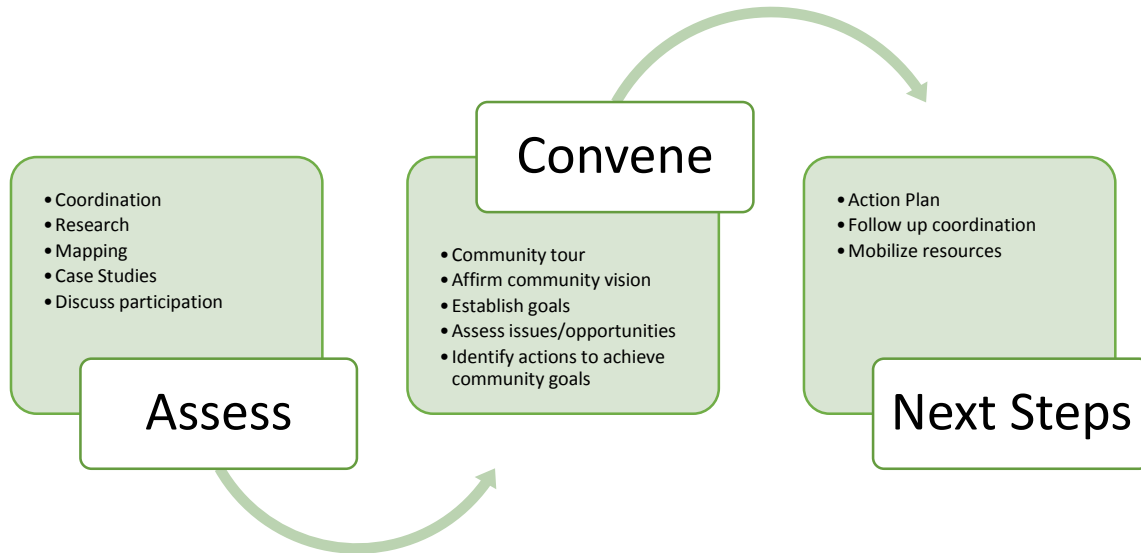


Figure 3 - Technical Assistance Process Diagram

Vision and Values

The first night of the workshop began with exercises for participants to share core values and beliefs. Values drive aspirations for the future, and voicing these values is key to paving the way to the detailed work of action planning on day two of the workshop. Participants were asked to write down their top three answers for the following questions:

1. What are the best opportunities for increasing the local food economy?
2. What are the biggest challenges for increasing the local food economy?

Below is a summary of the opportunities and challenges that workshop participants identified during the first night of the workshop. For a full detailed report of the responses from participants, see Appendix B.

- **Opportunities related to increasing the local food economy include:** establishing relationships for the institutional selling of local foods, better promotion and marketing of the Farmers' Market, expanded market locations/hours, creation of a community supported agriculture program (CSA), more programming/social activities related to the Farmers' Market and community gardens, and the creation of jobs/businesses within the community.
- **Challenges related to increasing the local food economy include:** monetary resources for Farmers' Market expansion, programs, and marketing/educational materials; deciding on a permanent location for the Farmers' Market; lack of a centralized agency to coordinate all local foods initiatives in the region; increasing the number of producers/customers; and making connections between local businesses and local foods.

Action Plan

The culminating product of the workshop is a strategic action plan to guide implementation. The plan is composed of goals, with accompanying actions to meet those goals. The full detail of the action plan is found in Appendix A. The workshop further clarifies, prioritizes and defines roles and responsibilities for moving forward. Additionally, workshop participants identified assets, opportunities and needs within their community through a mapping exercise. The results of this group exercise are found in Appendix B. The goals and actions that are part of this plan are summarized below:

Goal 1: Evaluate options for a seasonal and mobile farmers market.

- Action 1.1: Discuss and evaluate site options for the farmers market for both the short- and long-term.
- Action 1.2: Obtain funding to build a temporary or permanent farmers market pavilion.
- Action 1.3: Establish a mobile farmers market.
- Action 1.4: Conduct an inventory of downtown parking availability and needs for signage.
- Action 1.5: Construct a multimodal transportation corridor from downtown Barbourville to the Farmers' Market at the Knox County Extension Office site along Cumberland Avenue/Old 25 East.

Goal 2: Identify a sustainable model for organization, finance and governance of the Knox County Farmers' Market and other local food initiatives.

- Action 2.1: Establish an umbrella organization to coordinate various local foods initiatives that are beyond the scope of the existing Knox County Farmers' Market Board.
- Action 2.2: Complete a Community Food System Assessment.
- Action 2.3: Promote vendor/farmer collaborations to support different structures of agriculture-related businesses including community supported agriculture (CSAs), cooperative enterprises, and aggregator businesses.



Figure 4 – Brainstorming Action Items and Developing Implementation Ideas (Source: US EPA)

Goal 3: Expand access to local food by making it affordable and accessible.

- Action 3.1: Address issues of food security by establishing means for people to access healthy, local foods within the community.
- Action 3.2: Provide education on fresh food preparation through cooking demonstrations and recipe card distribution at the Knox County Farmers' Market and mobile market.
- Action 3.3: Expand outreach to underrepresented groups including low-income families, students and minority communities.
- Action 3.4: Conduct tours of the Knox County Farmers' Market and mobile market to better reach SNAP/EBT/WIC customers.
- Action 3.5: Conduct outreach to students at Union College about local food initiatives.

Goal 4: Seek opportunities to expand the use of local food in local businesses and institutions and to promote the sale of local food to local customers.

- Action 4.1: Develop a website and/or online market for the farmers market.
- Action 4.2: Purchase or create signage for the farmers market that helps direct customers to the farmers market site(s).
- Action 4.3: Produce marketing materials for the farmers market.
- Action 4.4: Develop a Local Food Directory (Print and Web Formats).
- Action 4.5: Expand the prepared food offerings at the Knox County Farmers' Market.
- Action 4.6: Increase purchasing of local food by institutions such as schools, healthcare facilities, churches and local restaurants in Knox County and the surrounding area.

Goal 5: Leverage the local food network to support economic and community development through connections to youth, development of food-related businesses and promotion of tourism.

- Action 5.1: Provide opportunities for business education related to local foods through Union College's Entrepreneurship Program.
- Action 5.2: Identify value-added opportunities for farmers/vendors.
- Action 5.3: Create a Young Persons Group to facilitate discussions of local food.
- Action 5.4: Provide farming/gardening education and mentoring opportunities.

Implementation and Next Steps

Three follow up calls were held after the workshop to keep momentum going, discuss the documentation of the plan, and plan the next steps to implement the action planning process. Listed below are some key activities and next steps that took place.

- Kathryn Engle contacted a University of Kentucky professor whose Fall 2015 class will be providing assistance to the farmers market in regard to marketing materials and website setup.
- As a follow-on to the technical assistance effort of Local Foods, Local Places, the Appalachian Regional Commission is providing a grant of \$20,000 to support the implementation of projects and/or supporting programs identified during the Barbourville workshop that will help the community advance their local food system and support livability. Based on goals and actions identified during the workshop, the following (Figure 5) presents some of the specific projects identified by the Knox County Farmers' Market Board that the ARC grant could support.



Figure 5 – Knox County Farmers' Market Priorities for \$20,000 ARC Grant

- The Knox County Farmers' Market has gotten quotes on several budget items including billboards, signage and a trailer for the mobile market.
- The Knox County Farmers' Market has acquired a website domain name.
 - www.knoxcountyfarmers.com
- Promotion and Marketing
 - A radio slot, started in mid-July, advertising the farmers market five times a day will run until the end of the farmers market season.

Livability Principles Advanced by Action Plan

Provide More Transportation Choices

One of the community needs identified during the assets, opportunities, and needs mapping exercise was creating bicycle and pedestrian connections to/from the existing farmers market at the Knox County Extension office and downtown Barbourville. This will make it easier for people to access the farmers market as well as have the added benefit of improving health by facilitating multiple modes of transportation.

Promote Equitable, Affordable Housing

While these efforts do not directly supply more affordable housing, the Knox County Farmers' Market aims to establish a mobile farmers market to reach customers who are not able to travel to the current weekly market. When established, the mobile market would be able to provide direct access to local foods and products to areas where there is affordable housing. Furthermore, during the community tour of downtown Barbourville, residents identified opportunities for potential future housing in the second- and third-stories of downtown buildings. Such housing would likely be attractive to students and recent graduates of Union College and to other Barbourville residents because of its proximity to downtown assets and to the college.

Enhance Economic Competitiveness

Union College and the Knox County Farmers' Market are partnering together to explore opportunities for entrepreneurial business education related to local foods within the community. This type of program will help grow the number of local businesses and could eventually lead to more restaurants and stores selling local food downtown. This will help improve Barbourville's attractiveness as a place to visit and live.

Support Existing Communities

One of the action steps relates to exploring the possibility of adding a second market location in downtown Barbourville on a piece of property currently owned by the City. By hosting a farmers market location downtown, it could attract further investment in downtown and expand the local food economy.

Coordinate and Leverage Federal Policies and Investment

The workshop efforts identified several opportunities to leverage different local, state and federal funding sources to grow the Knox County Farmers' Market.

Value Communities and Neighborhoods

The actions in this plan focus on providing access to healthy, local foods; growing the local economy; and exploring efforts to expand the farmers market and other local food-related businesses in downtown. By better connecting with the Union College student population and providing opportunities for gardening mentorship and volunteering, the Knox County Farmers' Market helps increase the social fabric of Barbourville.

Appendices

- Appendix A – Implementation Action Plan Tables
- Appendix B – Workshop Exercises and Mapping
- Appendix C – Workshop Participants
- Appendix D– Presentation Slides
- Appendix E– Workshop Photo Album
- Appendix F – Funding Resources
- Appendix G – References