

Technical Assistance Program







Local Foods, Local Places **Community Action Plan** for Rainelle, West Virginia



















June 2017

For more information about Local Foods, Local Places visit: https://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/local-foods-local-places

Contact Information:

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Project Contact: **Stephanie Bertaina** Office of Sustainable Communities
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Ave. NW (MC 1807T)
Washington, DC 20460

Tel: 202-566-0157

Email: bertaina.stephanie@epa.gov

Rainelle, West Virginia
Contact: Peggy Crowder
Greenbrier Valley Economic Development Corporation (GVEDC)
804 Industrial Park, Suite 5
Maxwelton, WV 24957
Tel: 304-497-4300

Email: pcrowder@GVEDC.COM

Community Story

Rainelle is small city of about 1,500 people in Greenbrier County, West Virginia. Totaling just over one square mile, its western city limit is the border between Greenbrier and Fayette counties. The Meadow River flows through the city in a westerly direction on its way to joining the Gauley River. As a former sawmill town Rainelle's experience is similar to many central Appalachian communities. The Meadow River Lumber Company, which operated in Rainelle from 1906 to 1975, was once the largest hardwood sawmill in the world. The business was sold to the Georgia-Pacific Corporation in 1970, and the mill was torn down in 1975. The loss of the mill catalyzed an economic downturn



Figure 1 – Gateway to Rainelle. Image Credit: Renaissance Planning

leading to increased unemployment—and a concurrent decrease in population—as community members relocated to other areas with more employment opportunities. Since 1980, the town has lost an average of nearly 200 residents per decade and presently has a 12 percent unemployment rate, with 29.3 percent of the population living below the poverty level. With a median age of 46.2 and an outmigration of young people, the town's aging population is older than the U.S. average (37.6)². For the full community data profile see **Appendix A**.

Agriculture is a primary economic driver in Greenbrier County, as well as the surrounding counties of Pocahontas and Monroe, collectively referred to as the Greenbrier Valley. Greenbrier County is a leader in West Virginia in agricultural production with 819 farms, and it is ranked first in the state for cattle and calf sales and third in turkey sales.³ Most of the produce and livestock farming, however, is in eastern Greenbrier County. Western Greenbrier County, including Rainelle, has limited tillable land available for produce production. Fewer than one percent of residents in Rainelle earn their income primarily from farming. On top of this, food insecurity in Greenbrier County is high (15.1 percent overall and 22.3 percent among children).⁴

Rainelle is challenged by increasingly prevalent public health issues and drug use. Rainelle's 36.1 percent adult obesity rate and 15.3 percent diabetes rate place a great burden on the resources of families and the community. A lack of access to fresh produce in the community creates challenges for meeting residents' nutritional needs, especially for children.

¹ U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=CF

² From Rainelle's Letter of Interest, submitted 2015 and U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

³ USDA/NASS, 2012 Census of Agriculture, Web Maps

http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2012/Online Resources/Ag Census Web Maps/

⁴ Feeding America Map the Meal Gap, http://map.feedingamerica.org/county/2013/overall

⁵ Healthy Food Access Portal Mapping Tool, http://www.healthyfoodaccess.org/get-started/research-your-community

⁶ USDA/NASS, 2012 Census of Agriculture, Full Report, https://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2012/Full_Report/Volume_1,_Chapter_2_County_Level

In 2015, the Greenbrier Valley Economic Development Corporation (GVEDC) requested assistance through the Local Foods, Local Places program to develop an action plan for promoting local food systems, and a healthy, walkable, economically vibrant community. The GVEDC is a regional economic development group supported by the state of West Virginia to assist communities in Pocahontas, Greenbrier, and Monroe Counties. 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; and
- Revitalized downtowns, main streets, and neighborhoods.

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

On June 23, 2016, just five days before Rainelle's Local Foods, Local Places workshop was scheduled to begin, Rainelle was caught at the epicenter of the most catastrophic flooding West Virginia has experienced in recent history. At least four Rainelle residents lost their lives and scores of homes and businesses were damaged or destroyed. EPA and other program partners worked to support Rainelle as best as possible throughout their response and early recovery period, but it was not initially clear if the Local Foods, Local Places effort would survive the disaster.

The project team stayed in touch with Rainelle's Steering Committee through the summer and fall of 2016 and tracked the progress of the city as residents worked to recover from the flood. In the winter, the Rainelle Steering Committee decided to reschedule the workshop for the spring of 2017, but the effort

STEERING COMMITTEE

MEMBERS

Peggy Crowder, Greenbrier Valley Economic Development Corporation (GVEDC)

Heather Hanna, GVEDC

Jonathon Dierdorff, United Methodist Church **Lori Alderson**, City of Rainelle

Mary Surbaugh, Rainelle Agricultural Learning Center

Andy Pendleton, Mayor – City of Rainelle

Tammy Jordan, Fruits of Labor

Woody Hanna, Greenbrier County Commission

John Tuggle

John Yates, Greenbrier Dairy

Candace McDaniel

Cassandra Hughart, WV Region 4 PDC

Cody Addison, West Virginia Food and Farm Coalition

Marti Neustadt, Value Chain Cluster (VC2) Initiative

Matthew Ford, Greater Greenbrier Long Term Recovery Committee Recovery Coordinator/ Core Environmental

Ron Fleshman, City of Rainelle Councilman

Sally Hurst, Greenbrier Health Alliance

Spencer Moss, West Virginia Food and Farm Coalition

Trudy Covington

Figure 2 – LFLP Steering Committee in Rainelle, West Virginia

needed a revamped steering committee and a new set of goals.

A variety of community partners came together in Rainelle to form the new Local Foods, Local Places Steering Committee in preparation for the technical assistance (see Figure 2). As goals, the Steering Committee named:

- Growing the local food economy and market.
- Making Rainelle a community of health and healing as primary goals.
- Activating and transforming downtown Rainelle.
- Creating economic and recreation drivers to help diversify the regional economy.

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 planning calls and discussions during the workshop, the community's goals evolved from those in the initial request for technical assistance to the four above, reflecting the holistic, collaborative approach to community development already underway in Rainelle, West Virginia.

Engagement

The technical assistance engagement process for Local Foods, Local Places has three phases, illustrated in Figure 3 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.

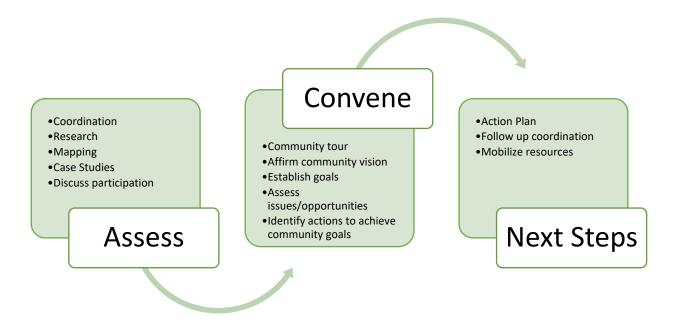


Figure 3 - Local Foods, Local Places Technical Assistance Process Diagram

The community workshop was held on April 6 and 7, 2017, and included lunch with the Steering Committee members and regional, state, and federal partners; a tour of the community; an evening community meeting at the Rainelle Methodist Church in downtown Rainelle (Day 1); and an action-

⁷ Because of the flooding disaster in the summer of 2016, additional check-in and planning calls were conducted with Rainelle to determine the usefulness of the technical assistance in the wake of the disaster and to re-assess goals and logistics once a decision to move ahead was made.

planning session, also at Rainelle Methodist Church (Day 2). The community meeting and all-day working session were well attended by key stakeholder groups, residents, and local leaders. The workshop sign-in sheets are provided in **Appendix B**.

Community Tour

The Local Foods, Local Places Steering Committee organized a luncheon on April 6th with key stakeholders at Rainelle's Fruits of Labor Café to introduce the project and to allow local leadership, project consultants, and federal agency

representatives to meet and discuss the workshop. Following the luncheon, the Steering Committee led a tour of key places and projects in Rainelle including the high tunnel at Rainelle Agricultural Learning Center (located at Rainelle Elementary School), Greenbrier Dairy (both the retail operation and future cheese production facility under construction), the Grace Village affordable housing development, and Rainelle City Hall. The devastation of last year's floods was still apparent in parts of town, though efforts to recover and rebuild were visible as well. The tour provided an overview of challenges and opportunities, and it allowed for informal discussions about the local food system and place-making efforts. Many of the locations visited are shown in Appendix C.

Vision and Values

Over 30 participants joined the first night of the workshop, including several regional partners representing state and federal agencies. Andrea "Andy" Pendleton, Mayor of Rainelle, and Peggy Crowder, of GVEDC, the chair of the Local Foods, Local Places Steering Committee, welcomed attendees to the event and spoke about the community's ongoing efforts. Mayor Pendleton and Peggy outlined the goals of the workshop process as well as the larger, longer-term goals of the Steering Committee. Matt Ford of the Greater Greenbrier Valley Recovery Committee discussed the potential opportunities for post-disaster recovery, including a rebranding of western Greenbrier County as the Meadow River Valley. The consultant team introduced the topics and program overview with a short presentation. Community members and other attendees were asked to write on index cards three challenges,

OPPORTUNITIES

challenges and opportunities present in the local food system and downtown revitalization efforts.

three opportunities, and their vision for success, for building the local food system and bringing new life to downtown Rainelle. A similar values-based exercise—"This I Believe"—asked participants to make one statement about their vision for Rainelle's future. Those ideas are summarized in Figure 4 and presented in **Appendix D**.

The themes shared during the opportunities and challenges discussion and during "This I Believe" revealed many of the group's aspirations for economic revitalization, improved health, entrepreneurship opportunities involving local foods, community pride, increased coordination among partner organizations, and promoting potential recreational opportunities generated by Rainelle's scenic beauty. The remainder of the workshop was built upon this positive, forward-thinking backdrop of values and visions for the future.



Figure 5 - Renaissance Planning produced a YouTube video of the workshop. The video is available at: https://youtu.be/GdXZRTcXNIk Shown here in a video screenshot is Mayor Andy Pendleton addressing the workshop on Day 2. Image Credit: Renaissance Planning.

The first day concluded with a review of the

workshop goals and discussion about the direction for action planning to follow on Day 2. Workshop participants helped to refine goals, which evolved into the action plan implementation tables that are detailed in the following section. In addition to creating the action plan, the second day of the workshop included presentations of case studies by the consultant team covering small town economic and community development, building wealth through community capital, creating value chains, and innovative disaster recovery stories.

Action Plan

The culminating product of the workshop was a strategic action plan to guide implementation. The plan is organized around four goals and includes actions the participants brainstormed at the meeting and during follow-up calls. The action plan matrix helps to further clarify, prioritize, and define roles and responsibilities for moving forward on these actions. The goals and actions that are part of this plan are in full detail below. A list of funding resources (**Appendix E**) and references (**Appendix F**) are provided to aid the community in implementing the goals and actions.

GOAL 1: Grow the Local Food Economy and Market

The actions developed to reach this goal are focused on making connections and expanding fresh food options. Workshop discussions revealed numerous opportunities to expand the production and provision of local foods in the Meadow River Valley. One critical key to enhancing Rainelle's local food network is connecting producers to consumers and aggregators. This may help support farmers who do not want to engage in directly selling and/or marketing of their produce and livestock but would do so through an aggregator. Rainelle's farmers market could also benefit from additional support and from

⁸ The Meadow River Valley (MRV) Initiative is a long-term recovery project championed by Matt Ford to rebrand the western part of Greenbrier County. Each community in the MRV will form an initiative team to lead the efforts in that community. These teams were currently under development as of May 2017.

exploring a range of venues and delivery methods to distribute local foods. To fully achieve this goal, Rainelle can continue taking advantage of opportunities to train youth and develop new avenues to reach and teach new and younger generation farmers.

Action 1.1: Identify farmers and growers in the Meadow River Valley and develop an online and print directory.

print directory.	
What this is and why it is important	Identifying farmers and growers in the Meadow River Valley that are interested in selling their products locally can help connect those producers to markets. Having a collection of names and contact information for producers and developing an online database and printed directory can help make it easier to make connections between those selling and those wanting to buy local products. Working on this action could also:
	 Broaden opportunities for farmers to sell their produce, livestock, and other locally grown products. Raise the profile of producers in the Meadow River Valley and provide marketing support. Connect producers and consumers.
Measures of success	 A directory is available online and in print More farmers are being connected to buyers
Timeframe	 0 months: Initiate efforts to aggregate profiles to include in the directory. 3 months: Make directory available online; continue to collect names and information to include. 6 months: Full database available and annual print version produced.
Lead	 West Virginia Food and Farm Coalition Include Rainelle and other Meadow River Valley producers on list currently in production. Cody Addison - West Virginia Food and Farm Coalition James Edens - President, Western Greenbrier Farmers Market Mary Surbaugh – Rainelle Agricultural Learning Center
Supporting cast	 Western Greenbrier Development Corporation Greenbrier Valley Economic Development Corporation Doug Koenig – Monroe Farmers Market West Virginia University Extension Service Future Farmers of America
Costs and/or resources needed	 Staff time/salary to collect names and develop online database VISTA support (West Virginia Food and Farm Coalition) Printing costs for directory
Possible funding sources	 Rainelle Medical Center West Virginia Food and Farm Coalition Donations

Action 1.2: Create a value-added facility for canning and other food production needs.	
What this is and why it is important	A facility that can be shared by small businesses and entrepreneurs to produce value-added food products such as jams, fermented produce, baked goods, honey products, and more, can provide an opportunity for local producers to add value and economic impact of their locally grown and made products. Working on this action could also:
	 Help bring costs down for small and start-up businesses by sharing equipment and facilities Incubate new businesses that support the local food and agriculture industry
Measures of success	 Feasibility assessment conducted to determine business support and potential community utilization of a shared space for value-added production Potential spaces identified for a shared value-added facility
Timeframe	18 months: complete assessment and identify a few potential spaces
Lead	Heather Hanna - Greenbrier Valley Economic Development Corporation
Supporting cast	Greenville Processing Facility (model)
Costs and/or resources needed	• Start up \$250K-\$500K
Possible funding sources	 Appalachian Regional Commission – feasibility study, building renovation, or equipment USDA Rural Development Community Facilities Direct Loan & Grant Program "Try This" West Virginia grants (\$500-\$3,000) Memorandums of Understanding/fees for facility use from potential producers

Action 1.3: Coordinate all farmers markets within the Meadow River Valley.	
What this is and why it is important	Coordinating existing farmers markets within the region involves surveying nearby markets to determine their schedules and making that information publicly available. Working on this action could also:
	 Ensure that markets within proximity are not in direct competition with each other. Help farmers plan a consistent and full schedule of bringing produce to market. Connect farmers to markets to sell their products. Determine if additional market venues are necessary (mobile markets, year-round indoor markets, etc.).
Measures of success	 Schedule of Meadow River Valley farmers markets is available online and at all Valley markets Increased number of vendors at Valley farmers markets

Action 1.3: Coordinate all fa	Action 1.3: Coordinate all farmers markets within the Meadow River Valley.	
	 Increased number of customers at Valley farmers markets Greater variety of products available at all markets More youth visiting/selling at market 	
Timeframe	 0-6 months: Pilot a mobile market Pilot a Dawson-based market 1 year: Explore feasibility of an indoor market 	
Lead	Mary Surbaugh - Rainelle Agricultural Learning Center	
Supporting cast	 Heather Hanna - Greenbrier Valley Economic Development Corporation Doug Koenig - Monroe Farmers Market City of Rainelle Churches West Virginia Farmers Market Association Rainelle Medical Center Fruits of Labor 	
Costs and/or resources needed	 Salary/staff time: Time to survey nearby markets and develop schedules Farmers market manager (part- or full-time) 	
Possible funding sources	 USDA Agriculture Marketing Service Farmers Market Promotion Program or Local Foods Promotion Program West Virginia Farmers Market Association Farmers Market Coalition (SNAP/EBT) Business sponsorships 	

Action 1.4: Train potential agricultural producers, starting with local youth.	
What this is and why it is important	Many farmers are nearing retirement age, so there is a need to train a new generation of producers. Rainelle is actively involving the youth starting in elementary school, but more opportunities are needed to continue this training beyond childhood, including technical assistance and business training for prospective producers, a farm apprenticeship program, or summer work opportunities. Working on this action could also: • Provide new farmers with the tools and resources needed to succeed.
	Help people develop farming and business skills.
Measures of success	 Increase in Junior Master Gardener certifications Number of high school graduates participating in farmers market, value-added production, or aggregation activities
Timeframe	0-6 months: Identify community sponsors to support Junior Master Gardeners Program

Action 1.4: Train potential agricultural producers, starting with local youth.	
	 0-6 months: Investigate partnerships with Alderson Food Hub, WVU Extension, and New River Tech to develop/deliver technical assistance programs
Lead	 Mary Surbaugh - Rainelle Agricultural Learning Center Sally Hurst - Greenbrier County Health Alliance Mystik Miller - Greenbrier County Health Alliance Gary Sawyers - Chair, Greenbrier Valley Conservation District Jack O'Connell - USDA NRCS, District Conservationist
Supporting cast	 Sprouting Farms Farm Resource Center Fruits of Labor Seeds of Hope Alderson Community Food Hub West Virginia State Extension Rainelle schools Sandra Byers - Agricultural teacher, Greenbrier West High School Possible high tunnel system Rainelle Medical Center Future Farmers of America Natural Resources Conservation Services New River Tech Veterans in Agriculture Trey Yates - Greenbrier Dairy Master Gardeners Kelly Goddard - VFW; West Virginia Veterans and Warriors to Agriculture
Costs and/or resources needed	 \$6,000 for VISTA High tunnel Staff/teaching time Supplies
Possible funding sources	• TBD

Action 1.5: Connect producers to aggregators.	
What this is and why it is important	Connecting producers to aggregators can help ensure a stable market for farmers and provides economic development opportunities in the Meadow River Valley. Working on this action could also:
	 Support local businesses and provide healthy food options, through a Meadow River Valley-style "Blue Apron" service, for example. Enable farmers/producers to broaden their existing market in a risk-limited way.
Measures of success	 Farmers/producers more connected to institutional buyers (local schools, etc.) Average age of producers decreases More products coming to market

Action 1.5: Connect produce	rs to aggregators.
	More producersFood from farms making its way into schools
Timeframe	0-6 months: Six new growers integrated into aggregation
Lead	 Greenbrier Valley Aggregation & Distribution Partnership Heather Hanna - Greenbrier Valley Economic Development Corporation Doug Koenig - Monroe Farmers Market
Supporting cast	 WVU Extension Service Sprouting Farms Farm Resource Center USDA NRCS Conservation District Value Chain Cluster Initiative (VC2) Gary Sawyers - Farm Service Agency Natural Resources Conservation Service Future Farmers of America Veterans to Agriculture Small Business Development Center The Hive
Costs and/or resources needed	 Transportation and equipment costs Cold storage Travel time (distance to nearest aggregation facility in Greenville is over 50 miles)
Possible funding sources	 CSX (Healthy Food Transportation Grants) USDA Robert C. Byrd Institute Appalachian Regional Commission – to support connection to existing Central Appalachian local food aggregation and distribution efforts supported by the POWER initiative

GOAL 2: Make Rainelle a Community of Health and Healing

Rainelle, the Meadow River Valley, and indeed much of Appalachia face several heath challenges including a high rate of obesity⁹ and spiking opioid abuse and addiction.¹⁰ Health crises in rural towns and communities are compounded by long distances to health and social service facilities and a general lack of health-related resources. During the workshop, participants envisioned Rainelle becoming a model for healing and health; a place that cares for and nurtures people; and a place where people come for healing, safety, security, and community. There are examples of community healing and action that are already taking place in the community, as illustrated by programs like the Fruits of Labor restaurant and bakery and the Seeds of Recovery Program. Run by Tammy Jordan, these programs offer

⁹ The adult obesity rate in Rainelle is 36.07 percent.

¹⁰ "Between 2011 and 2013, West Virginia suffered from a rate of 33.5 drug overdoses per 100,000 people, compared to a national average of 13.4 deaths, according to a report by the non-partisan Trust for America's Health and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation." http://www.businessinsider.com/how-west-virginia-became-the-epicenter-of-the-opioid-epidemic-2016-12

support and culinary training to young people who are recovering and rebuilding their lives after opioid addiction. Programs like these demonstrate the will and determination of people in Rainelle, and more action will only increase Rainelle's capacity to help and heal people. The actions contained within this goal area are focused on cultivating a culture of healthy food and healthy people in Rainelle, and move towards this vision of a healthy, supportive, and resilient community. Rainelle seeks to support all members of the community, with a special focus on creating opportunities for those who need them most, including the homeless, veterans, foster children (and those aged out of the foster system), and more.

Action 2.1: Develop a Comm	Action 2.1: Develop a Community Wellness Hub "Grow Healthy Community."	
What this is and why it is important	Building the skills of parents and children concurrently is imperative. An early childhood development center nestled within a larger "community wellness hub" is needed. This includes healthy nutrition and exercise activities and development of skills to promote good mental health. It involves all ages from seniors to infants and children.	
Measures of success	A "community wellness hub" is established, offering a farmers market and community garden, nutrition resources, indoor and outdoor walking trails, a recreation and community center, afterschool programs, teen programs, early child development center, yoga, mindfulness programs, counselling services, legal services.	
Timeframe	• 5 years	
Lead	• TBD	
Supporting cast	 Farmers market WIC SNAP WVU Extension Service Rainelle Town Council/Mayor Fruits of Labor Local churches Greenbrier West High School, Western Greenbrier Middle School, Rainelle Elementary Rainelle Medical Center 	
Costs and/or resources needed	 Cost of conducting a feasibility study and developing a comprehensive management plan Cost of programming Location to house center Fundraising time Volunteer time – Board of Directors, if formed as a nonprofit organization 	
Possible funding sources	 USDA Rural Development Community Facilities Direct Loan and Grant Program Donations 	

Action 2.2: Create a Veterans	Network.
What this is and why it is important	The Veterans community is disjointed, particularly for post-9/11 veterans. The Greenbrier Health Alliance (GCHA) aims to create a sense of community by building a network of veterans across generations and offering them resources and opportunities to get healthy and have active and engaged lives.
	The GCHA will identify Veteran Ambassadors who are active and engaged within their community and are looking to further build, connect, and support the veteran community.
	Working on this action could also:
	 Help the community heal by incorporating veterans into the community. Recognize that everyone matters and some need more support than others.
Measures of success	 Ambassador(s) identified and established Veterans active in programs, events Veterans participating in mini grant activities
Timeframe	 0-6 months: Identify, recruit, and train Ambassadors 6 months - 1 year: First mini grant awarded and implementation begun 1 year+: Evaluation of first mini grant
Lead	Mystik Miller - Greenbrier County Health Alliance
Supporting cast	 Bruce Murphy - West Virginia Department of Agriculture Farmer Veteran Coalition Doug and April Koenig - West Virginia Veterans and Warriors to Agriculture Dave Lumsden, Greater Greenbrier Long-term Recovery Committee
Costs and/or resources needed	 Volunteer time to identify/train ambassadors Funding for project mini-grants
Possible funding sources	 GCHA: can offer a \$1,000 mini grant to implement programming of their own design aimed at building community or improving member health. Ideas include Veterans to Agriculture, Master Gardeners, pairing veterans with senior citizens in community gardens, and Team River Runner. Farmer Veteran Fellowship Fund Bob Woodruff Foundation Farmloancenter.com Veteranagriculture.org

Action 2.3: Plan for, develop, and implement an Early Child Development Center.	
What this is and why it is important	The earliest relationships and experiences a child has with caregivers dramatically influence brain development, social-emotional and cognitive skills, future health, and success in school and life. An effective two-generation approach addressing both the community's unique needs and focusing on engaging both children and their parents is vital to the Meadow River Valley community. No such center currently exists.
Measures of success	 Feasibility study Comprehensive development plan Implementation
Timeframe	• TBD
Lead	 Dr. Lally - Rainelle Medical Center Martha Snider - Greenbrier County Health Alliance
Supporting cast	 Community parents Sally Hurst - Greenbrier County Health Alliance Sabrina McKinney - Rainelle Medical Center Head Start Right from the Start - Mickie Hughes Parents as Teachers - Sonja Ryder Greenbrier County Health Department North Central WV Community Action Association, Inc. (Vicki A Geary)
Costs and/or resources needed	 Cost of conducting a feasibility study and developing a comprehensive management plan Fundraising time Location to house center Volunteer time – Board of Directors, if formed as a nonprofit organization
Possible funding sources	 Try This West Virginia Greenbrier County Health Alliance Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships and Early Head Start Expansion grants West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine-Try This Funding collaborative

Action 2.4: Explore possibilities, and find champions, to create foster care facilities and extended housing for young people leaving foster care.	
What this is and why it is important	Every person has value and deserves a chance. There are no living facilities to help young people leaving foster care, and in general there are few homeless shelters or care centers in Greenbrier County. Working on this action could also:

Action 2.4: Explore possibiliti housing for young people lea	ies, and find champions, to create foster care facilities and extended wing foster care.		
	 Help provide needed basic social services and health care services that are minimal in Rainelle and the region. Provide safe and affordable housing or shelter for young people transitioning from foster care to life on their own. 		
Measures of success	 Increased foster care spaces available New services and housing available to ease foster care transition Reductions in homelessness or substance abuse in those "aging out" of the foster care system Increase in employment in former foster care recipients Reduction of recidivism rates of the homeless population 		
Timeframe	 O-6 months: Identify local champion Determine goals Solicit interested residents for fostering opportunities Work with town/local businesses to identify opportunities for internships/apprenticeships for individuals aging out of foster care 6-12 months: Training for new foster families Feasibility assessment for new programs and services (homeless shelters, transitional foster housing) 1 year + Identify potential partners and locations for transitional housing programs 		
Lead	Jonathan Dierdorff, Pastor - Rainelle United Methodist Church		
Supporting cast	 Nikki Thomas, Advancement Director - Golden Girl Group Home (they explore housing options for girls that provide continued educational and training options) 		
Costs and/or resources needed	 Costs would be high, this would be a significant project and effort to run. Initial costs would be exploratory, to find champions and potential locations. 		
Possible funding sources	 Greenbrier County Health Alliance can support efforts and can assist with fund raising and grants but cannot carry the project; a local agent/champion would be needed. 		

GOAL 3: Activate and Transform Downtown Rainelle

The actions contained within this goal area are focused on revitalizing and transforming downtown Rainelle. Years of economic decline followed by catastrophic flooding have left the Main Street district in great need of renovation and re-energizing. Underutilized buildings and vacant land provide opportunities to integrate local food efforts in the form of community gardens, new restaurants, and

other retailers and producers. The potential re-introduction of the farmers market to downtown may be a key strategy in activating this space and catalyzing broader economic revitalization.

Action 3.1: Establish a perma community space.	anent downtown location for farmers market and co-located
What this is and why it is	A permanent farmers market will help provide access to fresh,

What this is and why it is important	A permanent farmers market will help provide access to fresh, healthy, local foods for the residents of Rainelle. A farmers market can also attract other businesses and activities that can help bring additional vendors and customers to market, supporting the market's growth over time. Markets located downtown can attract visitors and generate more activity and vitality in the heart of downtown. Working on this action could also: • Create a downtown catalyst for revitalization. • Support the sale and purchase of locally grown and produced fresh, healthy foods in Rainelle. • Catalyze other community beautification and sustainability practices.
Measures of success	 Farmers market is created Farmers market is sustainable over the long-term Increased receipts at farmers market Increasing numbers of customers and vendors at market More activities happening in coordination with market
Timeframe	 6 months: conduct feasibility study for farmers market to determine demand and potential locations 1 year: Establish a temporary market to test feasibility of location 2 years: Establish a permanent location for the Rainelle farmers market
Lead	 Rainelle City Council Rainelle Long Term Recovery Committee WVU Extension agents Greenbrier County Convention and Visitors Center
Supporting cast	 Bruce Murphy - West Virginia Department of Agriculture Western Greenbrier Farmer Market Association (new organization formed post-workshop) West Virginia Region 4 Planning and Development Council Rainelle schools Future Farmers of America Association
Costs and/or resources needed	 Feasibility assessment Market manager Promotional materials Construct a permanent structure Install amenities (portable toilets, water, electricity, etc.)
Possible funding sources	 Appalachian Regional Commission to support feasibility assessment or construction

Action 3.1: Establish a permanent downtown location for farmers market and co-located community space.			
	 USDA Rural Development Business Grant (market study) Community Facilities Loan (structure) Region 4 West Virginia Regional Planning and Development Council: assist in securing funding for water or sewer needed at a permanent facility and help manage the project from conception to fruition Potential loan of land for temporary market Renting out the permanent shelter for other events to earn income Market volunteers 		

Action 3.2: Commission a fe	asibility study to assess downtown assets and barriers.	
What this is and why it is important	Commissioning a study to assess downtown assets and challenges will help Rainelle understand what currently exists in the downtown district, what can be leveraged to catalyze revitalization, and what might stand in the way of that redevelopment, including creation of a building inventory (including owner information, what is to be saved or demolished, etc.), access to the future walking trail, existing green space for beautification, and anything else in downtown that could be considered an asset. Working on this action could:	
	 Determine the people and organizations best suited to support revitalization. Identify potential transformation partners. Anticipate potential barriers to transformation and develop actions to overcome them. 	
Measures of success	 Reduction of blighted/vacant properties Number of new businesses in downtown Numbers of new partners engaged 	
Timeframe	 3-6 months: put out RFP and identify firm to undertake study 6 months - 1 year: complete feasibility study and develop actions based on results 	
Lead	Rainelle City Council	
Supporting cast	 Long Term Recovery committee Rainelle Mayor Pendleton Meadow River Valley Chamber of Commerce (under development) West Virginia University Region 4 West Virginia Regional Planning and Development Council Greenbrier Valley Economic Development Corp. 	

Action 3.2: Commission a feasibility study to assess downtown assets and barriers.	
	WV Community Development Office (Monica Miller)
Costs and/or resources needed	 Committee time to manage funding Consultant time and expenses
Possible funding sources	 USDA Rural Development Business Grants Appalachian Regional Commission Economic Development Administration Region 4 West Virginia Regional Planning and Development Council: assist with seeking/securing funding for a feasibility study and managing that grant

Action 3.3: Utilize existing in	ventory of properties to help revitalize downtown.
What this is and why it is important	Creating an inventory of properties that are available for purchase and buildings in need of renovation can help direct potential business owners to available properties and identify priority revitalization areas in the downtown. Working on this action could also:
	 Continue to identify underutilized buildings and lots that are available for purchase, renovation, and reuse. Prioritize areas, lots, and specific buildings for reuse that would help revitalize downtown. Identify potential locations for public art installations (temporary or permanent).
Measures of success	 Improved appearance of Main Street buildings and streetscapes Higher rents for buildings on Main Street Increased revenues for businesses on Main Street Creation of an "Adopt a Spot" program for greening vacant lots/areas in downtown
Timeframe	 Ongoing: up-to-date inventory of downtown properties 0-3 months: Identify priority redevelopment sites and potential locations for public art 6 months - 1 year: Identify funding to support streetscape enhancements on Main Street
Lead	City of Rainelle
Supporting cast	 Meadow River Valley Chamber of Commerce (in development) WV Community Development Office (Monica Miller) Candace McDaniel, Design Professional Local gardeners Community volunteers Students Local artists

Action 3.3: Utilize existing inventory of properties to help revitalize downtown.		
Costs and/or resources needed	 Time to maintain property inventory and keep up to date Time and materials for beautification and public arts projects 	
Possible funding sources	 HUD Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery funds EPA Brownfields Grants (Assessment and Cleanup, Area-Wide Planning) Main Street USA program Volunteer time Donations 	

GOAL 4: Create Economic and Recreation Drivers to Help Diversify the Regional Economy

Many workshop participants identified that Rainelle and the Meadow River Valley have many natural resource-based assets that could draw tourists to the area. Tourism, in addition to local food and agriculture, could help diversify the economy of the region, and having a formal strategy in place to leverage these assets could help amplify the impact. Incorporating trailhead work into economic development efforts, as is planned for the Rail-to-Trails project, can help build upon tourism's economic impact in the town and region. Marketing to advertise points of interest and tourism opportunities in Rainelle, and the Meadow River Valley more broadly, can help bolster these efforts. Finally, supporting existing and new businesses means understanding their needs and identifying and seeking out businesses that will best complement the town's attractions and best utilize the community's assets and resources.

Action 4.1: Create a city-backed leadership group to support economic development efforts.		
What this is and why it is important	Currently, there is no formal structure in place to support potential entrepreneurs or business enterprises who would like to locate in Rainelle or the greater Meadow River Valley region. Working on this action could also:	
	 Create and build capacity to respond and act on potential business opportunities. Support businesses that want to locate in the area by identifying existing properties and buildings available for purchase and reuse. Develop the capacity of the Meadow River Valley Chamber of Commerce to support existing and attract new businesses. 	
Measures of success	Build on the efforts of the long-term recovery initiative teams by creating a formal 501(c)(3) (currently under development)	
Timeframe	 6 months: Leadership group convened 1 year: Leadership group organized as a formal 501(c)(3) 	
Lead	Meadow River Valley Initiative: Rainelle team (under development)	
Supporting cast	Greenbrier Valley Economic Development Corp.West Virginia Community Development Hub	

Action 4.1: Create a city-back	red leadership group to support economic development efforts.
	 West Virginia Center for Civil Life Generation West Virginia What's Next West Virginia West Virginia University Women's Business Center ACE Adventure Resort
Costs and/or resources needed	 Volunteer time for individuals serving on the board of directors for Meadow River Valley Initiative. Staff to assist with community and economic development tasks such as working with existing businesses on business planning and collaboration, working with new/potential business owners to leverage opportunities. \$20,000 to assist with incorporation and filing of 501(c)(3), staff consisting of AmeriCorps VISTAs, and office space.
Possible funding sources	BB&TClaude Worthington Benedum FoundationOne Foundation

Action 4.2: Explore opportunities to support additional local businesses at the greenway/k	lue way
trailbead	

trailhead.		, , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , ,	
What this is and why it is important	development creates an opportue conomic development in Raine trailheads. 11 Outdoor outfitters, businesses might be interested i advantage of this new asset in the popular route for tourists en rou could better capitalize on the reattractions by developing and cothat would provide opportunitie visit, and shop, all of which wou Signature assets like access to a	elle, especially at and around restaurants, bicycle shops, and of in locating near trailheads to take he community. Rainelle is located ute to the New River Gorge area argion's nature-based recreation connecting more of its own local as es for people to stop, stay, recreat ald contribute to the local economic trail system or Rails-to-Trails project other business endeavors that we rking on this action could also:	ther on a nd sets e, y. ect
Measures of success	Trail re-opened and comTrailheads established	npleted	

¹¹ The Meadow River Trail is a planned 23.1-mile pathway that will run from Rainelle to Nallen and may one day connect to the Gauley River National Recreation Area. In 2016, 16.7 miles has been purchased and funded for development and another 6.4 has been purchased and yet to be developed. Several miles of trail had been built and bridges decked but were destroyed in June 2016 floods. Currently, the trail can only be accessed at Nallen. http://wvrailtrails.org/rail-trail/meadow-river-trail/

Action 4.2: Explore opportunities to support additional local businesses at the greenway/blue way trailhead.		
	Businesses open at trailheadsIncrease in tourism to the area	
Timeframe	 6 months: Release Request for Proposals for trailhead feasibility study 1 year: Feasibility study for trailhead(s) complete 2 years: Trailheads under development, new businesses opening 	
Lead	Town of Rainelle	
Supporting cast	 Doug Hylton - Greenbrier County Team Leader (Rails to Trails) West Virginia Region 4 Planning and Development Council Fayette and Greenbrier Counties Chamber of Commerce West Virginia Department of Transportation WVU Design Team Local business owners 	
Costs and/or resources needed	\$25,000 for feasibility studyFunding for developing trailhead areas	
Possible funding sources	 Region 4 West Virginia Regional Planning and Development Council: assist in securing funding for water or sewer needed at a permanent facility and help manage the project from conception to fruition. West Virginia DOT - Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) promotes bike/pedestrian friendly activities BB&T Appalachian Regional Commission funding could support feasibility study Department of Transportation West Virginia University 	

Action 4.3: Create a tourism marketing plan.	
What this is and why it is important	Rainelle and the Meadow River Valley have several exciting new opportunities and points of interest coming on line soon. Marketing these new assets effectively to the right audience will help ensure that investments made generate a positive impact on the regional economy. Working on this action could also: • Identify target tourism market to best utilize investments that
Measures of success	 Rainelle is making in its community. Marketing campaign underway Increase in tourism
Timeframe	 1 year: Identify firm to develop marketing materials 2 years: Revisit efforts to determine if marketing has been effective

Action 4.3: Create a tourism marketing plan.		
Lead	 Meadow River Valley Initiative Fayette and Greenbrier Counties Chamber of Commerce 	
Supporting cast	 West Virginia State Department for Tourism Greenbrier Valley Convention and Visitors Bureau Town of Rainelle Other regional towns Greenbrier Valley Economic Development Corporation Small Business Development Corp. Existing businesses Media New River Gorge Regional Development Authority WVU Design Intern 	
Costs and/or resources needed	 \$10,000 for marketing study and materials development Funding for marketing materials and ad campaigns 	
Possible funding sources	 West Virginia State Department of Tourism Local Tax Revenue Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation Greenbrier Valley Convention and Visitors Bureau BB&T 	

Action 4.4: Conduct business outreach to draw new businesses from outside town to downtown Rainelle.		
What this is and why it is important	Attracting new businesses to the Meadow River Valley, and in downtown Rainelle specifically, will help draw more people to the area, supporting both new and existing enterprises. Marketing the area can introduce businesses to the opportunities and assets of Rainelle and the greater Meadow River Valley region. Working on this action could also: • Attract new business ventures. • Support and expand existing businesses. • Create vitality in downtown Rainelle – making it a place with options for residents and tourists alike.	
Measures of success	 Development of a Rainelle "pitch book" Number of businesses starting up and locating in the town and Meadow River Valley Sustainability of existing and new businesses Increased incomes of local businesses 	
Timeframe	• 1+ year	
Lead	Meadow River Valley Chamber of Commerce (forthcoming)	
Supporting cast	 West Virginia State Department for Commerce Greenbrier and Fayette Counties Chambers of Commerce West Virginia Economic Development Agency 	

Action 4.4: Conduct business outreach to draw new businesses from outside town to downtown Rainelle.	
Costs and/or resources needed	\$15,000 (develop pitch book and identify target businesses)
Possible funding sources	West Virginia Economic Development Agency

Additional Action Ideas

The action plan above represents the efforts at the workshop to detail top priority actions. In addition to these actions, during the brainstorming process several additional actions were brought up that Rainelle may consider pursuing in the future as well. They are listed here for future reference.

GOAL 1: Grow the Local Food Economy and Market

Workforce & Life Skills Training:

- Utilize available resource people for community education programs, grant opportunities, etc. (WVU Extension Service, USDA, West Virginia Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Farm Service Agency, Brownfields Job Training, etc.).
- Youth opportunity create a space and building to educate, train, and entertain (healthy eating, healthy lifestyle, healthy involvement).
- Introduce simulated workforce training program in high school; incorporate Fruits of Labor model.
- Offer free healthy foods cooking class (Rainelle Medical Center can facilitate space).
- Expand Rainelle Agricultural Learning Center offerings/opportunities for continued youth engagement in local foods/healthy eating/entrepreneurial education.
- Expand existing youth education programs growing, cooking, and selling local food.
- Offer college extension courses.
- Develop a training garden.
- Develop on-the-job training programs.

Growing:

- Grow crops for food markets local and outside the area.
- Plan for high tunnel and garden expansion.
- Designate green space or indoor space for food production.
- Get back into the agriculture market (NOT natural resources).
- Find local farmers who want to grow more and support the Meadow River Valley food economy.
- Veteran community: two one-acre plots, two high tunnels, community coordinator.
- Grow your own food.

Selling/Distributing:

- Create more farmers markets.
- Identify and engage with regional food aggregators and distributors (food hubs) to learn how local producers can tap into larger markets (Refresh Appalachia, Wild Ramp, Charleston Market, etc.).

- Utilize web-based opportunities to market/sell to co-ops.
- Tie into local co-ops for producers.
- Start a local foods market.
- Create markets/relationships with local university to purchase Meadow River Valley products.

Goal 2: Make Rainelle a Community of Health and Healing

- Work with young kids on agricultural learning programs to prevent addiction (FFA/4-H).
- Use elementary school space to foster after school care and summer sports programs with help of churches, etc.
- Identify location to create a safe location for youth to live when aging out of foster care or unsafe environment (shelter, Rupert children's home).
- 221 homeless in Greenbrier County, not all in foster care but some can't go home because of abuse.
- Build a homeless shelter.
- Offer a Youth Junior Master Gardening program with veterans.

GOAL 3: Activate and Transform Downtown Rainelle

- Apply to brownfields vacant and dilapidated building program to renovate existing buildings.
- Create loan fund or crowdfunding for downtown revitalization efforts.
- Get capacity funding to support entrepreneurs' food efforts for growing and distributing local foods in existing buildings and spaces in Rainelle.
- Build a community center to offer education, VFW, college classes, food prep, streetscape.
- Identify who owns Main Street storefronts.
- Identify owners of properties designated for development/beautification.
- Inventory Main Street properties; determine businesses needed for the area; develop business start-up kits to promote/ease business start-ups.
- Provide financial incentives to clean trash provide summer jobs.
- Fine land owners that are not taking actions.
- Direct land owners to money and manpower to avoid fines.
- Incentivize local Main Street property owners to fix up property, rent to businesses, etc.
- Check ownership of former Center Chevrolet property; possible location for farmers market.
- Develop location for permanent farmers market as community hub for activities and education.
- Formulate permanent farmer's market/pavilion/splash pad/business incubation structure with outdoor worship.

Goal 4: Create Economic and Recreation Drivers to Diversify the Regional Economy

- Create places so people want to come to Rainelle places to eat, shop, stay; things to do- see local foods produced, see local craftsmen at work, trails, walk/bike, river float/camping rentals, supply shops.
- Inventory available commercial properties; market to entrepreneur networks as startup spaces (WVU, other higher education, training program, and beyond).
- Make known the existing facilities.
- Create industry cluster around recreation rail trail, blue trail, ATV.

 Recruit businesses operating in recovery to create an industry cluster with Fruits of Labor as anchor.

Implementation and Next Steps

Three post-workshop conference calls were held during May and June 2017, following the workshop. The calls were held with the Local Foods, Local Places Steering Committee and additional stakeholders whose interest was cultivated during the workshop. The action plan was further refined and clarifying language added, as needed. Some of the key actions and post-workshop developments included the following:

- Formation of a farmers market committee to explore creation of the Western Greenbrier
 County farmers market; meetings convened to discuss market bylaws, locations, and vendors.
- Exploration of locations for additional high tunnels and the farmers market by a small group of stakeholders.
- Meeting with the West Virginia Center for Civic Life to discuss facilitator training for Meadow River Valley participants to help support community conversations and outreach.
- Exploration of the potential for new farmers market vendors in eastern Fayette County.
- Attendance at Farmers Market Association Meeting to discuss the collaboration of the four main farmers markets in the region, so that all four markets will participate in each community to increase vendor interest and customer attendance.

Appalachian Regional Commission Implementation Assistance

The ARC is making available to each of the Local Foods, Local Places communities in its service area implementation funding assistance of up to \$20,000. The funding is intended for specific actions identified in the workshop and post-workshop action planning effort. As of June 2017, the community was still discussing the action(s) that ARC funding will be used to implement.

Appendices

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