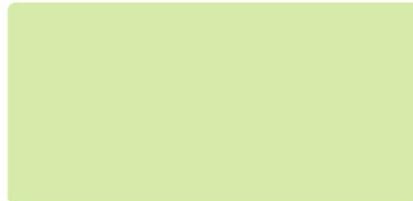
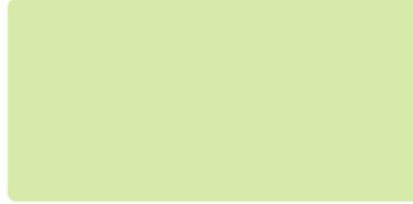




LOCAL FOODS, LOCAL PLACES

Technical Assistance Program



Strengthening the
Local Foods System
and Downtown
Revitalization:

Actions and Strategies
for Walterboro, South
Carolina

November 2016



Community Story

Walterboro is a small city of 5,000 in Colleton County, located west of Charleston in the South Carolina Lowcountry. Nicknamed “the front porch of the Lowcountry,” the city has several key assets: a charming downtown, a successful farmers market, a newly opened commercial kitchen, and the South Carolina Artisans Center. The farmers market and commercial kitchen are housed in the Colleton Museum located downtown and near the South Carolina Artisans Center. The downtown business industry is largely based on the niche antique market, but several small restaurants and offices are located downtown as well. Major crops produced in Colleton County are typical of the South Carolina Lowcountry, including cotton, soybeans, peanuts, corn, squash, and tomatoes. Rice, another major commodity, is so celebrated in Colleton County due to its importance in the local economy that a three-day rice festival is held in downtown Walterboro every spring.



Figure 1 – The Colleton Museum and Farmers Market includes a museum focused on the history of the county and a farmers market that operates twice a week. It also includes a café and shop and is connected to the Colleton Commercial Kitchen. Image Credit: Renaissance Planning

Founded in 1783 as a summer retreat for Charleston residents, the city is rich with history and culture, particularly food culture. Walterboro has a small town feel but is located with easy access to surrounding larger metro areas, and it is only an hour drive from Charleston. Historically, the economy was largely manufacturing and agriculture-based, but employment opportunities in these industries have decreased, resulting in a smaller tax base. As is common in many small cities and towns, the lack of employment options has resulted in an outmigration of young, educated workers, which contributes to economic issues.

Twenty-seven percent of families in Walterboro live in poverty, and the median household income is \$24,135, compared to a state median income of \$44,779. Eighteen percent of Colleton County residents and 24 percent of its children experience food insecurity. Ninety percent of these food-insecure people are eligible for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. Health issues are prevalent in Walterboro, with 38 percent of adults being obese and 18 percent of adults suffering from diabetes.

Despite the economic struggles, the County and local partners have made great strides in working to create a vibrant downtown. The County developed a sidewalk connectivity plan to connect downtown with the surrounding neighborhoods. This connectivity helps residents easily walk to downtown and its major assets. The co-location of the South Carolina Artisans Center, Farmers Market, Colleton Museum, and Colleton Commercial Kitchen in downtown creates a draw for residents to frequent downtown. The South Carolina Artisans Center is the state’s official folk art and craft center and features the work of over 250 South Carolina artists. The farmers market operates two times per week, on Tuesdays and Saturdays, and connects local small-scale farmers with residents in need of access to healthy, fresh foods. The Colleton Museum promotes and preserves the historical, natural, cultural, and agricultural heritage of Colleton County with research, education, and collections on display.

In May of 2015, the Colleton Commercial Kitchen opened for local vendors and entrepreneurs to rent space to prepare meals and other edible goods. Located on the same property as the farmers market and museum in downtown, the Commercial Kitchen also has a lunch counter and small market that sells food made at the kitchen. This major community asset was created thanks to significant grassroots efforts, support of local and state officials, financing from USDA's Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant (REDLG) program, and loan sponsorship through the Palmetto Rural Telephone Cooperative, Inc. (PRTC).

Though they have significant local food assets, Walterboro has areas to improve upon, including fully leveraging and utilizing these assets to ensure their long-term success, taking advantage of their central location to help revitalize downtown, strengthening the farmers market with new vendors and customers, and reaching low-income residents.

In 2015, the Colleton Museum and Farmers Market requested assistance through the [Local Foods, Local Places](#) program to develop an action plan for addressing these issues to grow the local food system and improve downtown. Walterboro was one of 27 communities across the United States selected to participate in the program in 2016.

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). The goals of the 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.

This report and its appendices document the Local Foods, Local Places technical assistance engagement process, workshop outcomes, and the action plan and next steps for achieving the community's goals. A steering committee (Figure 2) was created to help plan the workshop and guide the community's initial

LOCAL FOODS, LOCAL PLACES STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Gary Brightwell, Director, Colleton Museum & Farmers Market

Matt Mardell, Colleton Commercial Kitchen Manager

Gale Doggette, Director, South Carolina Artisans Center

Marilyn Peters, Retired, Clemson University Extension Services

Brenda Hughes, Lowcountry Regional Coordinator, South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control

Scott Steedley, International Center for Sustainability

Karla Daddieco, Retired Colleton County Government; Board of Directors, Colleton Center

Joshua Cable, Principal, Colleton County High New Tech Academy

David M. Smalls, Retired, Community in Schools

Michelle H. Strickland, Director of Tourism, City of Walterboro

Figure 2 – Local Foods, Local Places Steering Committee in Walterboro

steps to implement the resulting action plan. Over the course of the three planning calls and workshop discussions, the community’s goals evolved from those in the initial request for technical assistance to the five shown below. They reflect the holistic, collaborative approach to community development already underway in Walterboro, South Carolina.

Walterboro’s Strategic Action Plan Goals

1. Revitalize downtown as a local foods and arts destination.
2. Grow the farmers market with programs to support existing vendors, attract new vendors, and reach low-income residents.
3. Support operations of the community kitchen to meet the needs of local producers and sustain it into the future.
4. Create education programs to strengthen the local food system.
5. Develop a strategy to foster local and regional collaboration and involvement and create new partnerships.

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.

The community workshop in Walterboro was held on August 16 and 17, 2016. It included a small lunch gathering with the steering committee members and regional, state, and federal partners at the Colleton Museum’s cafe; a tour of the community; an evening community meeting at Colleton Museum; and an action-planning session, also at the Colleton Museum, on the second day. The community meeting and all-day working session were attended by key stakeholder groups, residents, and local leaders. The workshop participants are listed in Appendix C.

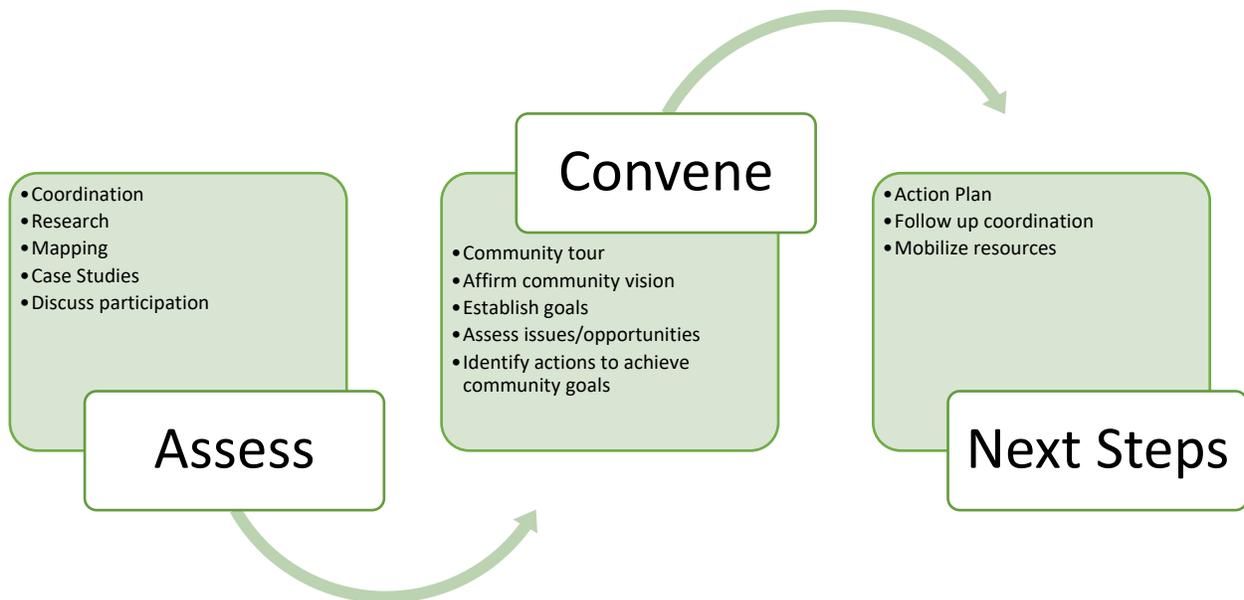


Figure 3 - Technical Assistance Process Diagram

Community Tour

The first day of the workshop began with a group lunch among the project team and the local steering committee members at the Colleton Museum’s cafe. Following lunch, the group conducted a walking tour of downtown Waterboro that included the Bedon Lucas House, the South Carolina Artisans Center, and several downtown businesses. The walking tour effectively captured some of the important historic and cultural assets that bring visitors to downtown Waterboro and why this city has been branded as the “the front porch of the Lowcountry.” The final visit on the community tour included a short car ride to the Walterboro Wildlife Sanctuary, which is an important nature-based attraction in the city that includes 842 acres of estuarine preserve, many miles of hiking/canoe trails, and various historic and cultural sites.

The tour provided an overview of the challenges and opportunities in Waterboro and allowed for informal discussions about the local food system and place-making efforts. A number of the locations visited are shown in pictures in this report and in Appendix D.



Figure 4 – Waterboro’s main street is lined with antique shops, offices, and restaurants, although vacant storefronts also exist. Image Credit: Renaissance Planning



Figure 5 – The South Carolina Artisans Center located in downtown brings in thousands of visitors each year. Image Credit: Renaissance Planning

Assets, Opportunities, and Challenges in Walterboro

During the community meeting on night one of the workshop, the facilitators led meeting participants through an exercise to identify what they believe are the top challenges and opportunities for Walterboro related to its food and place-making goals. The results of this exercise are summarized in Figure 6. In spite of several challenges, Walterboro has many opportunities to reach its goals.

For example, vacant storefronts throughout downtown present a challenge but also an opportunity to bring new businesses to the area that Walterboro residents would like to see. Harnessing the positive energy surrounding the farmers market and commercial kitchen can help create harmony amongst the downtown business owners that could encourage new businesses to locate there. The co-location of several major cultural and arts assets in downtown and the city's location near Charleston just off of I-95 can be leveraged to draw visitors and passersby that would support existing and new businesses downtown.

Food System Assets

Understanding the components of a local food system value-chain can help a community prioritize where to spend labor or money to strengthen any capacity gaps and "weak links" (see more detailed results included in Appendix B). At the workshop, the facilitators presented an initial map of Colleton County's local food system and asked participants to provide additional input to identify areas to strengthen.

Based on discussion during the food-system-mapping exercise, the group agreed that Walterboro's biggest strength includes its *processing* and *marketing* services provided by the Colleton Museum, Farmers Market, and Commercial Kitchen. These existing facility assets, which often have the most significant financial capital requirements in a local food system, can also be leveraged to strengthen the weaker links in the value chain, including:

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Challenges:

- Limited number of small farmers and not enough young farmers
- Limited diversity of produce grown and sold at the farmers market
- Significant poverty
- Racial divides
- Underutilized storefronts
- Assets not fully leveraged
- Inadequate collaboration
- Inadequate financial support for educational programs
- Communication gaps
- Uncertain long-term sustainability of existing assets
- Discord among downtown business owners

Opportunities:

- Abundance of artistic, cultural, historical, and natural assets
- Existing local food and cultural hub: Colleton Museum, Farmers Market, Commercial Kitchen, SC Artisans Center
- No similar facility in the state like the Colleton Commercial Kitchen
- Attractive downtown
- Proximity to I-95
- Proximity to Charleston
- Many visionary and engaged professionals and volunteers
- Permaculture learning space available
- Access to government resources: local, state, and federal (Promise Zone)

Figure 6 - Workshop participants' summarized thoughts on the challenges and opportunities for Walterboro's local food system and downtown revitalization efforts.

- *Distribution:* The commercial kitchen could serve as a central location for regional aggregators like GrowFood Carolina based in Charleston, which would expand marketing for Colleton County producers and products.
- *Production:* The commercial kitchen and farmers market could help attract food artisan entrepreneurs and young farmers (particularly from the Charleston-area farm incubators) who are looking for new opportunities, more affordable land/rent, and value-added processing options.
- *Consumption:* The museum, commercial kitchen, and farmers market could expand training and education opportunities to the public, vocational students, and youth groups through events and programs.
- *Nutrient cycling:* The site could provide a place for the central collection of organic wastes from the commercial kitchen, café, farmer’s market, and other downtown restaurants for off-site composting or livestock (e.g., pastured swine) supplement.

Building Capacity

The workshop facilitators also discussed strategies for building capacity in a local food system. One of the main points discussed is the importance of having a lead coordinator to manage the value chain, which is a network of people, businesses, organizations and agencies meeting demand in a market with specific products or services (see Figure 8). Successful coordination of the whole system allows the chain to continually build local and regional wealth rooted in multiple forms of capital, while allowing individual components to advance self-interests. Unlike larger economies heavily influenced by macro-economic factors, local value-chain systems cannot operate sustainably on their own. Ideally, the coordinator is a paid position through public/private partnerships, although volunteer groups like steering committees can also fill this role, at least temporarily until a paid position can be created.

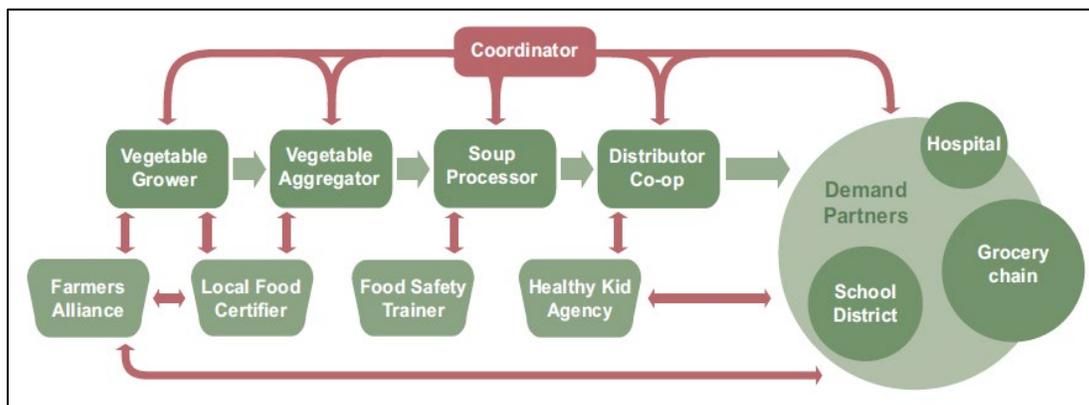


Figure 8 - Value chain graphic from presentation highlighting role of local coordinator

As a follow-up to the capacity-building discussion, the group also discussed potential gaps among the existing primary decision makers in the local food system. Since “you can’t change what you don’t manage,” facilitators emphasized the advantages of including all of the necessary people needed for

meeting the group's goals early in the planning process. This discussion identified the following as important stakeholders missing from the current steering committee:

- Representatives for/from the low-income community (potential representatives: Lowcountry Community Action Agency or faith-based community)
- Existing and new small farmers
- Palmetto Rural Telephone Cooperative (PRTC)

Incorporating a representative of these stakeholder groups into the steering committee and continuing to meet regularly as a steering committee could help ensure successful implementation of the action plan. The steering committee could serve as the temporary coordinator for Walterboro's local food and arts economy. As first steps, the steering committee could fill some of the gaps in stakeholder representation on the committee, form a mission statement to focus subsequent actions, and determine the best model for governance and productive collaboration.

Action Plan

The culminating product from the workshop is a strategic action plan to guide implementation. The plan is organized around five goals and includes actions the participants brainstormed at the workshop and during follow-up calls. The detailed action plan tables, located at the end of this report, help to further clarify, prioritize, and define roles and responsibilities for moving forward on these actions.

Goal 1: Revitalize downtown as a local foods and arts destination.

Downtown Walterboro has a lot to offer visitors, but many visitors or people passing through may not easily find out about these opportunities. The focus of this goal is to strengthen efforts to advertise downtown to bring more visitors, which can be done through a video documenting downtown assets and also through commissioning public art to be displayed downtown. The current business environment is also not conducive to new businesses coming in due to discord amongst current owners. Facilitating conversations among the business owners will be necessary in creating an environment welcoming of new businesses to diversify the business mix in downtown.

- Action 1.1 – Create a video to describe local food assets and resources that can be used on websites, social media, school classrooms, and Palmetto Rural Telephone Cooperative (PRTC).
- Action 1.2 – Hold a meeting to explore the possibility of creating a new downtown business organization with a neutral facilitator.
- Action 1.3 – Commission public art for downtown around a theme that is used throughout Walterboro in other ways (related and connected to us) and create an event around the unveiling.

Goal 2: Grow the farmer's market with programs to support existing vendors, attract new vendors, and reach low-income residents.

The Colleton Farmer's Market already serves as an important asset to Walterboro residents and the local food system. Not only does it have a good location at the Colleton Museum with covered parking, but also undergone the process to incorporate SNAP/EBT services for its lower income customers. However, workshop participants identified a strong need to expand both its farmer/vendor base and increase customer attendance, which can be facilitated by the below actions:

- Action 2.1 – Turn the farmers market into an event, with music, artists, food trucks, and pop-up tent restaurants. Start with implementing the event-themed farmers market one Saturday per month to begin to increase the number of attendees.
- Action 2.2 – Initiate a farmer/producer asset identification exercise to develop a comprehensive list of all the growers in the county.
- Action 2.3 – Expand the service area of the mobile market by adding more farmers and more locations.
- Action 2.4 – Engage Future Farmers of America in the Farmers Market.

Goal 3: Support operations of the commercial kitchen to meet the needs of local producers and sustain it into the future.

Although the Colleton Commercial Kitchen is already functioning and meeting its financial targets, it is only operating at 25 percent with room to grow. It has the advantage of being the only commercial kitchen like it in the entire state of South Carolina. This goal focuses on securing the future resource base for this important community asset through additional programming, marketing, and producer supply.

- Action 3.1 – Expand the operations of the commercial kitchen to utilize kitchen as a processed food hub or co-packer facility.
- Action 3.2 – Focus more marketing efforts in the Charleston region to let farmers know about the kitchen and its services.
- Action 3.3 – Create an apprenticeship program that matches young farmers with older farmers.
- Action 3.4 – Identify 20 new food entrepreneurs to expand the use of the kitchen.

Goal 4: Create education programs to strengthen the local food system.

A primary concern of workshop participants and steering committee members is education and engagement (particularly with youth) in civic involvement, healthy eating and lifestyle habits, and the continuation of farming (both as culture and as vocation). Therefore, this goal focuses on specific efforts to reinforce the educational programs that provide necessary training around food and farming, and positive exposure to younger ages.

- Action 4.1 – Establish a Learning Development Farm with a permaculture-based farmer incubator component to train young adults in profitable agriculture enterprises.
- Action 4.2 – Implement multifunctional green space projects like edible parks, green infrastructure practices, and community gardens throughout Walterboro.
- Action 4.3 – Begin direct outreach to teachers and school system that includes a combination of volunteer-led programs (similar to existing ICS school garden for special-ed students) and capacity building with school district staff for curriculum modifications that include fresh food/gardening/healthy lifestyle education.
- Action 4.4 – Establish an agricultural ideas exchange program via coordination from Clemson Extension staff.

GOAL 5: Develop a strategy to foster local and regional collaboration and involvement and create new partnerships.

There are many projects, programs, and assets in Walterboro and Colleton County, but many of these have overlapping missions or provide similar services. Sharing information about what is available to residents, organizations, teachers, and community leaders will help coordinate efforts, share resources, and ensure that people are aware of all of the opportunities Walterboro and Colleton County have to offer. The following action step will initiate this effort of greater local and regional collaboration:

- Action 5.1 – Initiate a direct marketing campaign to regional residents about the many assets in Walterboro related to food, the arts, and nature. This can be done through a number of mediums, including video, ads, and social media.

Potential Additional Actions

Other ideas were mentioned at the workshop that should be noted for future reference. While these potential action steps (listed below) are not described more fully in the action plan, they are still ideas to consider as Walterboro seeks to enhance its local food system and downtown in the future.

1. Help establish a farm-to-table restaurant in downtown.
2. Create artistic gateways at downtown entrances and along Highway 17.
3. Develop an annual event that hosts farm-to-table dinners (or “progressive meals”) on Washington Street, as was historically done in Walterboro in the 1940’s.
4. Infill vacant properties on Main Street with public green spaces.
5. Work with hotels located near I-95 to advertise and promote Walterboro’s downtown.
6. Create incentives that attract businesses (both new and existing) to the downtown to help diversify the current offerings and activities.

Implementation

Three post-workshop conference calls were held with the steering committee in September and October 2016, following the workshop. The calls were held with the steering committee and federal and state agency partners. These calls helped the steering committee refine the action plan and add clarifying language.

Post-Workshop Successes

In the two months following the August 2016 workshop, Walterboro has already made progress in advancing its goals.

Local and Regional Promotion

- The Colleton Museum and Farmers Market is working with the city of Walterboro to develop a video highlighting the local food and arts assets, using funding and support from the USDA Art of Community: Rural SC program and they are working towards a deadline of June 2017.



Figure 10 – Pride of community was evident throughout Walterboro. Image Credit: Renaissance Planning

Local Foods, Local Places Technical Assistance Workshop

- Gale Doggette with the South Carolina Artisans Center has applied for a grant for directional ecotourism signage through the South Carolina Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Department.

The Farmers Market

- The market hired a new farmers market manager to replace the retiring manager. The duties of the new market manager will incorporate many of the ideas raised at the workshop. The new manager is bringing new energy and ideas to the farmers market and has already made progress on many of the action steps related to the farmers market.

Commercial Kitchen

- The kitchen is starting to work with GrowFood Carolina to create a partnership to identify potential producers that may be interested in using the kitchen, as well as expand GrowFood Carolina's network of both growers and wholesale customers.
- William Furman with the Small Business Administration (SBA), is helping to connect Matt Mardell, Commercial Kitchen Manager, with "Lowcountry Local First," an organization based in Charleston looking to grow local businesses. They are starting a new program called the "Growing New Farmers Program," which provides introductory level classroom and hands-on training in farm production and business planning. They also offer optional apprenticeship placement with a mentor farmer that provides extended job-based training. This relationship will be mutually beneficial in that land prices in Charleston are soaring, whereas they are low in Colleton County. Additionally, this creates potential for connecting these new farmers with the commercial kitchen to further grow the number of vendors using the kitchen.
- The kitchen has signed up two new vendors: a food truck operator and a sauce manufacturer
- Since the workshop, the South Carolina Small Business Development Center has begun to meet with farmers at the farmers market to explore ways the center could help their businesses.
- The kitchen is participating in a new Feeding Innovation Program, a competition for local business owners that would help develop business-oriented skills in food deserts through the SC Community Loans Fund program. The program entails business class training followed by a competition with a Shark Tank-style presentation the winner of which will receive funding to implement their business idea. They are planning for a fall 2017 timeline.
- Jim Johnson is in the process of applying to create an 1890 Research Grant with the SC State School of Business that would provide financial and technical assistance for farmers and food entrepreneurs in Colleton County, with a focus on supporting the Commercial Kitchen. Funding is from USDA and if approved would result in \$600,000 in grant funds, with around \$50,000 dedicated towards Colleton County and would begin in summer 2017.

School Garden

- Scott Steedley is continuing to develop the school garden at the high school and to construct tree house platforms at Steedley Farm (located three miles from the Great Swamp Sanctuary). These structures will serve as wildlife observatories, retreat accommodations, and natural building models for the Abundant Immersion Retreats (AIR) project, which will also provide part of the programming for the planned incubator farm referenced in Action 4.1. Completion of the tree house structures is expected by March 2017. He also applied for and received a permit to build a forest garden at Steedley Farm. The website is finished and up and running at www.centerforsustainability.net

Education

- Students at Cougar New Tech/Colleton County High School participated in a school project that involved a field trip to the Colleton Museum, Farmers Market, and Commercial Kitchen. Students then worked in groups to identify ways to revitalize downtown Walterboro.

Appendices

- Appendix A – Community Profile Data
- Appendix B – Food System Assets and Opportunities
- Appendix C – Workshop Participants
- Appendix D – Workshop Photo Album
- Appendix E – Funding Resources
- Appendix F – References

Action Plan Implementation Details

GOAL 1: Revitalize downtown as a local foods and arts destination

Action 1.1: Create a video to describe local food and arts assets and resources that can be used on websites, social media, school classrooms, and Palmetto Rural Telephone Cooperative (PRTC).		
Why is this important?	A video would identify and communicate the local resources to inspire people to take advantage of what is here already and create new resources. It can also be an economic development tool.	
Measures of Success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Video is created • Venues for showing are identified • Number of new customers at the farmers market and kitchen café and store • Number of views 	
Timeframe for Completion	Planning meeting in September; filming during fall harvest; edit in winter; disseminate in spring 2017	
Taking the Lead	Michelle Strickland (City of Walterboro)	
Supporting Cast	Palmetto Rural Telephone Cooperative (Jason Cook); Brenda Hughes; City; Colleton Museum; De’Ante Small; Colleton Center; South Carolina Artisans Center	
Cost Estimate	Dollars	Time
	Around \$2,000	Staff time
Possible Funding Sources	Grant from The Art of Community: Rural SC with a match from SC Artisans Center and Colleton Center; USDA Federal State Marketing Improvement Program (FSMIP)	

Action 1.2: Hold a meeting to explore the possibility of creating a new downtown business organization		
Why is this important?	Fostering a stronger, collaborative relationship amongst the downtown businesses could generate more customers. The city has an opportunity to harness the energy surrounding the farmers market, museum, and commercial kitchen towards creating this new partnership. Supporting existing businesses helps grow new businesses by creating a welcoming business climate. The City of Walterboro is beginning discussions with business owners and will work toward eventually holding a meeting.	
Measures of Success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of people who show up to the meeting • Number of people who agree to engage 	
Timeframe for Completion	6 months	
Taking the Lead	Michelle Strickland (City of Walterboro); Host at Colleton Center; Hank Amundson (Lowcountry Council of Governments) to facilitate meeting; Jill Chadwick will approach him	
Supporting Cast	City manager; city tourism director; Chamber of Commerce; downtown merchants	
Cost Estimate	Dollars	Time
	Refreshments \$100; alcohol	Merchants' time
Possible Funding Sources	Potluck style so people bring their own beverages and food; USDA Rural Business Development Grants	

Action 1.3: Commission public art for downtown around a theme that is used throughout Walterboro in other ways (related and connected to us) and create an event around the unveiling.		
Why is this important?	Public art will enhance downtown and the Artisans Center. It draws people's eye and may get people to stop who otherwise would have just passed through. It would show that the community cares about art and quality of life.	
Measures of Success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of sponsors to fund the commission of the art 	
Timeframe for Completion	1 year total; meeting in January to decide on the theme; enlist sponsors in the spring	
Taking the Lead	Gale Doggette, South Carolina Artisans Center	
Supporting Cast	Colleton Museum; Clemson University; City Tourism Director (Michelle Strickland); Downtown merchants (Jorge Ruiz and Indre Valencia); Endra	
Cost Estimate	Dollars	Time

Action 1.3: Commission public art for downtown around a theme that is used throughout Walterboro in other ways (related and connected to us) and create an event around the unveiling.		
	Around \$10K	Staff time
Possible Funding Sources	Raised from sponsors (hospitals, banks, utilities, insurance companies); National Endowment for the Arts Our Town Grant	

GOAL 2: Grow the farmers market with programs to support existing vendors, attract new vendors, and reach low-income residents

Action 2.1: Turn the farmers market into an event, with music, artists, food trucks, and pop-up tent restaurants. Start with implementing the event-themed farmers market one Saturday per month to begin to increase the number of attendees.		
Why is this important?	Creating a fun environment with different activities at the farmers market will bring more customers in to the market, which will then make it more attractive to bring in more farmers.	
Measures of Success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of people coming to the farmers market • Number of farmers selling at the market • Sales of produce and goods 	
Timeframe for Completion	Start process now; Have big market kickoff event when market starts back in May 2017	
Taking the Lead	New Colleton Farmers Market manager	
Supporting Cast	Farmers; LFLP steering committee; Colleton Museum, Colleton Farmers Market and Commercial Kitchen staff; artists; musicians	
Cost Estimate	Dollars	Time
	Low	Farmers Market manager’s time to coordinate
Possible Funding Sources	USDA Farmers Market Promotion Program; USDA Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program; USDA Rural Development Community Facilities Program	

Action 2.2: Initiate a farmer/producer asset identification exercise to develop a comprehensive list of all the growers in the county.	
Why is this important?	More farmers are needed at the farmers market and a more diverse assortment of produce will draw more customers to the market. There are many farmers in the county, but many are not registered through any official means. An assets inventory

Action 2.2: Initiate a farmer/producer asset identification exercise to develop a comprehensive list of all the growers in the county.		
	will allow the farmers market manager to know who is out there and how to contact them. A map or list at the Farmers Market and Museum that people can add to would help grow the list as many growers are just known by word of mouth. Identifying contact information for these growers and developing a liaison between the market and growers will facilitate initiating conversations with them about the farmers market.	
Measures of Success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farmers asset inventory is started (it will be continually added to) • Relationships with new farmers are developed • New farmers sell at the farmers market • A more diverse assortment of produce is sold at the market 	
Timeframe for Completion	This will be ongoing but should get started as soon as the new Farmers Market manager is hired	
Taking the Lead	New Farmers Market manager	
Supporting Cast	Students or retirees to help with asset mapping; University of South Carolina students; Agricultural Science students at the high school	
Cost Estimate	Dollars	Time
	Low	Student, volunteer, and Farmers Market manager time
Possible Funding Sources	USDA Farmers Market Promotion Program; USDA Community Food Projects Grant	

Action 2.3: Expand the service area of the mobile market by adding more farmers and more locations.	
Why is this important?	A bigger service area would provide better access to fresh healthy food for those not able to easily access the farmers market. Currently, one farmer drives his own vehicle to locations in the county. This could be expanded to include more locations to reach more low-income residents and also include more farmers to provide more produce.
Measures of Success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in number of mobile market stops • Increase in number of farmers selling in mobile market
Timeframe for Completion	Start looking into additional funding sources and options when the new Farmers Market manager starts
Taking the Lead	Farmers market manager
Supporting Cast	Clemson Extension; Eat Smart, Move More; farmers; Agricultural Science students; South Carolina Department of

Action 2.3: Expand the service area of the mobile market by adding more farmers and more locations.		
	Agriculture. The Federally Qualified Health Center could be a partner for supporting expanded service area and a potential new mobile market stop.	
Cost Estimate	Dollars	Time
	Money for gas	Farmers Market staff time
Possible Funding Sources	USDA Farmers Market Promotion Program; USDA Community Food Projects Grant; USDA Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive (FINI) Grant; USDA Rural Business Development Grants; USDA Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program; USDA Rural Development Community Facilities Program	

Action 2.4: Engage Future Farmers of America (FFA) in the Farmers Market.		
Why is this important?	FFA students would gain an opportunity to sell food they grow and to support farmers selling at the market. Some farmers are unable to sell at the market because they cannot take time away from their farm. The FFA students could man the tables for farmers so they do not need to take time away from their farms, which could increase the number of farmers selling at the market. This also creates a mentor-mentee relationship between young and older farmers. This will help to teach young farmers the value of selling produce at a farmers market and how to run a stand.	
Measures of Success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New young farmers are added to farmers market • Additional farmers are added thanks to help of students 	
Timeframe for Completion	When season starts in May 2017	
Taking the Lead	New Farmers Market manager; FFA instructor	
Supporting Cast	FFA students; Clemson University Extension; Eat Smart, Move More; farmers; Agricultural Science students; South Carolina Department of Agriculture; Agricultural Science teachers (Mr. and Mrs. Lutton); new Colleton County 4H agent	
Cost Estimate	Dollars	Time
	Low	Students, Farmers Market manager, FFA teacher time
Possible Funding Sources	USDA Farmers Market Promotion Program; USDA Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program	

GOAL 3: Support operations of the commercial kitchen to meet the needs of local producers and sustain it into the future

Action 3.1: Expand the operations of the commercial kitchen to utilize the kitchen as a processed food hub or co-packer facility.		
Why is this important?	There is a high demand for a co-packing facility to freeze and preserve locally grown food. The concept is to purchase fruits and vegetables from farmers or Grow Carolina for raw processing. In addition, value-added producers could potentially use the produce to make sauce, jams, etc. in large batches that can then be sold around the region. This can create a new genre of food enterprise for the city and county. This also reduces waste of “ugly” vegetables that wouldn’t be sold at the market but are in perfectly edible condition.	
Measures of Success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-packing operation is begun • New value-added producers are brought in • More food is processed 	
Timeframe for Completion	Medium-term	
Taking the Lead	Matt Mardell (Kitchen Manager)	
Supporting Cast	New co-packing enterprise; AmeriCorps VISTA volunteers; Grow Carolina; Growers	
Cost Estimate	Dollars	Time
	Facilities already exist to do certain types of co-packing. User fees would likely cover costs of operation.	Continued marketing from kitchen manager. Need to develop relationship with business willing to do the co-packing.
Possible Funding Sources	USDA Rural Business Development Grants; USDA Value-Added Producer Grants; USDA Business and Industry Guaranteed Loan Program	

Action 3.2: Focus more marketing efforts in the Charleston region to let farmers know about the kitchen and its services.	
Why is this important?	Better marketing could get more regionally produced goods into the work flow of the commercial kitchen, including value-added, farmers market (consignment), and minimally processed food. The Commercial Kitchen is a unique tool that Charleston does not have. It can attract out-of-county business to help sustain the kitchen long-term and increase the diversity of products made and sold at the commercial kitchen and farmers market. One idea is to have a launch event for new products created in

Action 3.2: Focus more marketing efforts in the Charleston region to let farmers know about the kitchen and its services.		
	the kitchen that incorporates art and makes it a fun experience.	
Measures of Success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Track producers coming in and where they are from 	
Timeframe for Completion	Immediately and ongoing	
Taking the Lead	Matt Mardell (Kitchen Manager)	
Supporting Cast	Farmers Market manager; Grow Carolina; Ted Chewning; Jennie (Museum); local culinary students; business entity to do processing and distribution under contract	
Cost Estimate	Dollars	Time
	Funds for communication with and travel to Charleston farmers; salary for director of farmers & products; grant research	Staff time. Need to develop relationship with business willing to do the co-packing.
Possible Funding Sources	Advertising money; USDA Federal State Marketing Improvement Program (FSMIP)	

Action 3.3: Create an apprenticeship program that matches young farmers with older farmers.	
Why is this important?	Older farmers can impart their wisdom of farming methods, and young farmers can help the farmers with the farmers market and forms necessary for using the commercial kitchen. The young farmers may also be more willing to use produce to create value-added products. To sustain the kitchen into the future, a sustainable stream of farmers is needed to supply the food of the commercial kitchen. This program can help to break down barriers between young and old farmers and create and preserve cultural heritage. This is an opportunity to try new methods, for both the young and the older farmers. Also an opportunity to utilize the AmeriCorps VISTA program for farmer volunteers.
Measures of Success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishing formalized program with work, funding, and potentially housing solutions included Involvement from institutions willing to work with school age youth as well as young adults Graduates of “program” Measure of output of farmers (young and old)
Timeframe for Completion	Long-term

Action 3.3: Create an apprenticeship program that matches young farmers with older farmers.		
Taking the Lead	Matt Mardell (Kitchen Manager)	
Supporting Cast	Educators; Farmers Market Manager; Ted Chewing; Clemson Extension; 4H; Tri-County Technical College; AgSouth Farm Credit; Farm Bureau; Future Farmers of America	
Cost Estimate	Dollars	Time
	Low cost model with volunteer time could be set up as phase one. More formalized and organized program would need operational funds.	Need to find those willing to mentor and spend time working this type of program.
Possible Funding Sources	USDA Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program; USDA Rural Business Development Grants; USDA Folk Life program	

Action 3.4: Identify 20 new food entrepreneurs to expand the use of the kitchen.		
Why is this important?	Creating more and new businesses and expanding the use of the commercial kitchen will require on-going recruitment, though the more entrepreneurs using the kitchen, then more awareness of the kitchen spreads through word of mouth. One place to start is by looking at regional products and identifying where they are made – is it local and could they utilize the kitchen?	
Measures of Success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • User applications • Production log 	
Timeframe for Completion	Long-term	
Taking the Lead	Matt Mardell (Kitchen Manager)	
Supporting Cast	Advertise through Clemson, Savannah College of Art and Design; College of Charleston	
Cost Estimate	Dollars	Time
	Low cost	Staff time
Possible Funding Sources	USDA Rural Business Development Grants; USDA Value-Added Producer Grants	

GOAL 4: Create education programs to strengthen the local food system

Action 4.1: Establish a Learning Development Farm with a permaculture-based farmer incubator component to train young adults in profitable agriculture enterprises.		
Why is this important?	Utilize existing plans by EcoFreeCo. LLC for farm/permaculture training and education center proposed within 5 miles of downtown Walterboro. Although the training center targets children and adults of all ages, the incubator farm is focused towards high school and college students.	
Measures of Success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishment and participation within first 1 to 2 years 	
Timeframe for Completion	Medium-term	
Taking the Lead	International Center for Sustainability	
Supporting Cast	Tri-County Technical College; Clemson Extension (SCWBF Program); Lowcountry Local First; Grow Food Carolina	
Cost Estimate	Dollars	Time
	\$50K	Staff time
Possible Funding Sources	USDA Rural Development; USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service; 1890s extension; AgSouth Farm Credit; private investors; USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (due Dec. 8, 2017)	

Action 4.2: Implement multifunctional green space projects like edible parks, green infrastructure practices, and community gardens throughout Walterboro.		
Why is this important?	To beautify the town while increasing exposure and education to fresh food and functional landscaping. Projects will be focused within the downtown area on vacant/underutilized lots and public lands (e.g., existing parks).	
Measures of Success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial public and community support Successful financial acquisition Number of projects implemented and sustained in first five years 	
Timeframe for Completion	Long-term	
Taking the Lead	City or county staff	
Supporting Cast	Regional coordinator (local subcontractor with expertise in landscaping); master gardeners	
Cost Estimate	Dollars	Time
	\$5K to \$40K	Staff time

Action 4.2: Implement multifunctional green space projects like edible parks, green infrastructure practices, and community gardens throughout Walterboro.	
Possible Funding Sources	Walmart; Boeing; EPA Brownfields program grants; USDA Rural Energy for America Program; Utility Co-ops

Action 4.3: Begin direct outreach to teachers and school system that includes a combination of volunteer-led programs (similar to existing ICS school garden for special-ed students) and capacity building with school district staff for curriculum modifications that include fresh food/gardening/healthy lifestyle education.	
Why is this important?	Youth education provides exposure to healthy food and lifestyles at influential/habit-forming ages.
Measures of Success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of presentations given • # of meetings with staff • Number of curriculum modifications • Number of experiential learning projects
Timeframe for Completion	Begin with short-term
Taking the Lead	LFLP steering committee; representative from school district (Cliff Warren)
Supporting Cast	Scott Steedley; master gardeners; community volunteers
Cost Estimate	Dollars
	\$0 for programming; up to \$5K for infrastructure (water access & high tunnels)
	Time
	Staff and volunteer time
Possible Funding Sources	PTA; Utility co-ops; USDA Rural Development Community Facilities Program

Action 4.4: Establish an agricultural ideas exchange program via coordination from Clemson Extension staff.	
Why is this important?	Establish an agriculture mentors and ideas exchange program to help train new farmers and provide additional marketing/production opportunities to older farmers.
Measures of Success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of training session or mentorships
Timeframe for Completion	Medium-term
Taking the Lead	Alta Mae
Supporting Cast	Clemson Extension (Sean Janachek)
Cost Estimate	Dollars
	Time

Action 4.4: Establish an agricultural ideas exchange program via coordination from Clemson Extension staff.	
	\$0-\$500 per training
Possible Funding Sources	Clemson Extension

GOAL 5: Develop a strategy to foster local and regional collaboration and involvement and create new partnerships

Action 5.1: Initiate a direct marketing campaign to regional residents about the many assets in Walterboro related to food, the arts, and nature. This can be done through a number of mediums, including video, ads, and social media.	
Why is this important?	A targeted campaign could increase awareness of Walterboro and attract more people into town from around the region. It could help get community buy-in for efforts to strengthen Walterboro’s core assets and would expand the customer base for Walterboro businesses, including the farmers market and café.
Measures of Success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of mailings sent • Revenue over time • Redemption of coupons created to draw people downtown • Survey boards @ market
Timeframe for Completion	Start in short-term; long term to compare year-to-year changes
Taking the Lead	Michelle Strickland (City of Walterboro)
Supporting Cast	Brenda Hughes; Lowcountry Area Health Education Center; Colleton Center; Colleton Museum
Cost Estimate	Dollars
	\$5K for ads
Possible Funding Sources	State grants; ATAX (accommodations tax)