



Community Action Plan for Duck Hill, Mississippi

LOCAL FOODS, LOCAL PLACES TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

October 2018



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:

Melissa Kramer

Office of Community Revitalization

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

1200 Pennsylvania Ave. NW (MC 1807T)

Washington, DC 20460

Tel: 202-564-8497

Email: Kramer.melissa@epa.gov

Duck Hill, Mississippi Contacts:

Romona Taylor Williams

ASEEDS & Local Foods Local Places Project Lead

North Montgomery Communities United for Prosperity (M-CUP)

102 Carrollton Street

Duck Hill, MS 38925

Tel: (314) 363-5229

Email: rftwilliams@gmail.com

Al White

Executive Director

Action Communication and Education Reform (ACER)

610 Headstart Street

Duck Hill, MS 38925

Tel: 662) 809-7002

Email: actioncer108@yahoo.com

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COMMUNITY STORY

The town of Duck Hill is in north central Mississippi, on U.S. Route 51 in Montgomery County. The town was chartered in 1852 and received its name from the Choctaw Indian Medicine Man “Chief Duck.” It is rural, with the largest nearby cities being Memphis (105 miles south) and Jackson (95 miles north). The population of 1,461 is typical for a small, rural Mississippi Delta town: 72 percent black or African-American and 27 percent white, a median household income of half the state average at \$21,000, and an unemployment rate of 10.2 percent.¹ The Montgomery County population is 53 percent white and 45 percent African-American, and most of the African-American population lives in the northern section of the County where Duck Hill is located.

The population of Duck Hill has nearly doubled since 2010. The increase is attributed to the re-migration of adult children moving back to Mississippi to care for aging parents and retirees and young families looking to raise their children in safer environments,² but despite its population growth, Duck Hill is still declining economically, and the town has been experiencing extensive flooding due to poor stormwater and flood protection measures.

The census numbers for Duck Hill are not encouraging. The average income, child poverty, educational attainment, and other numbers are below state averages on all accounts.³ From a health perspective, there are several issues confronting the community, including a 43 percent obesity rate,⁴ and the census tract the town is in is considered a food desert.⁵ The closest full-scale grocery stores are 15 miles in Winona, the county seat, and 15 miles in the city of Grenada.

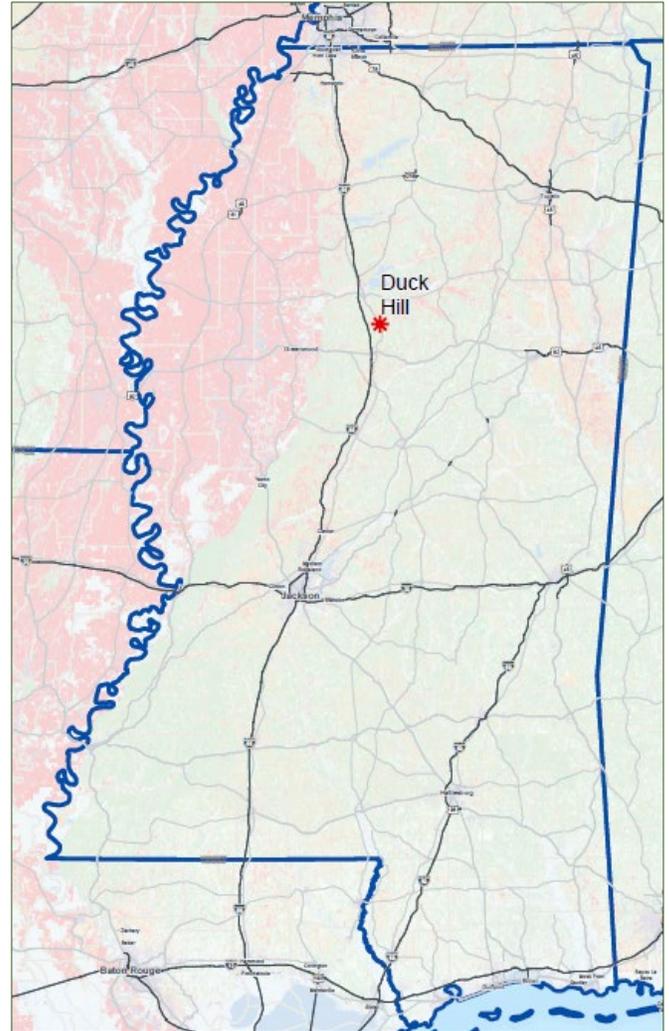


Figure 1 – Context map, Duck Hill, Mississippi. Map credit: EPR PC

¹ U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

https://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/ACS/16_5YR/DP05/1600000US2820260. Accessed September 12, 2018.

² Action Communication and Education Reform (ACER). Letter of Application to Local Foods, Local Places, July 2017

³ U.S. Census profile summarized by EJSCREEN: Environmental Justice Screening and Mapping Tool.

<https://ejscreen.epa.gov/mapper/>. See appendix D for demographic and socioeconomic profiles collected from EJ Screen. Accessed June 1, 2018.

⁴ Healthy Foods Access Portal. <http://www.healthyfoodaccess.org/access-101/research-your-community>. Accessed June 1, 2018.

⁵ USDA Economic Research Service, Food Access Research Atlas. <https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-access-research-atlas/go-to-the-atlas.aspx>. Accessed June 1, 2018.

Despite the challenging socio-economic picture, this region is rich in culture, history, natural resources, institutions of higher learning, and talent. The people in Duck Hill and surrounding Montgomery County are resolved to take on the overwhelming challenges to address their community and economic development needs through the lens of equity, inclusion, and sustainable principles and practices. There are local groups, organizations, churches, and individuals taking concrete steps to address a long history of inequity and inter-generational poverty that is common throughout many rural areas and towns in the Delta. These groups have a strong emphasis on creating opportunities for the county's most vulnerable citizens, those in poverty or with limited access to resources and quality education.

One key local initiative is ASEEDS, which stands for Achieving Sustainability through Education and Economic Development Solutions. ASEEDS is an effort supported by the Southeastern Sustainability Directors Network, the Kendeda Fund, and the Delta Regional Authority. ASEEDS is a diverse coalition of people and organizations who are working on a model to make vulnerable communities in Mississippi more sustainable and resilient. Some key ASEEDS partners are listed in Figure 2. Duck Hill was chosen for a two-year project, and together with partners and the leadership of the town has convened a task force that is focusing on the following initiatives:

1. Develop a comprehensive master plan for Main Street and neighborhood redevelopment.
2. Address storm water runoff and flooding.
3. Revise the Town's 1975 land use and zoning plan to incorporate smart growth and sustainability principles.
4. Build upon the town's culture, rich history, and natural resources to become a tourist attraction.
5. Improve the health of all Duck Hill residents through active living and healthy eating.
6. Repurpose the vacant historic Lloyd T. Binford High School into a Center for Arts, Culture and Social Impact.
7. Implement youth centered activities and after school programming.
8. Facilitate aging in place and give seniors something creative to do.

ASEEDS Partner Organizations

- Mayor Cooley and Board of Aldermen/women, Town of Duck Hill
- Action Communication and Education Reform (ACER)
- County Board of Supervisors
- North Montgomery County Communities United for Prosperity (M-CUP)
- EcoAdapt
- MS State University College of Architecture, Arts and Design
- State Bank and Trust
- Sustainability Works, LLC.
- Montgomery County Main Street
- Montgomery County Arts Council
- Grenada Tourism Council

Figure 2 – ASEEDS partners, a coalition working to make Duck Hill and the region more sustainable, healthy, resilient, and prosperous. ACER was the applicant for the Local Foods, Local Places technical assistance, with close support of other partners.



Figure 3 – Local Foods, Local Places visiting technical assistance team poses with members of the local committee and the ASEEDS sign, June 28, 2018. Image credit: EPR

The ASEEDS initiative consists of several partners that started meeting in May 2017. They began to prioritize the initiatives above, focusing first on stormwater flooding. The Southeastern Sustainability Directors Network awarded Duck Hill \$300,000 to mitigate stormwater runoff, flooding, engage the community in EPA’s Seven Elements of Collaborative Problem Solving, and develop a Conservation Saturday School that trains youth to be conservationists and creek rangers. The stormwater mitigation work began in spring 2018. The project has an economic impact by providing green infrastructure training and hiring six local, hard to employment men. The creek rangers are also being trained in green infrastructure like the creation of rain gardens.

Another key organization and ASEEDS partner is the Action Communication and Education Reform (ACER). In July 2017 ACER, with the support of the town, requested assistance through the Local Foods, Local Places program to develop an action plan to help with the various initiatives underway, many of which included increasing access to and education about local food, building places and community centers, engaging youth, and repurposing old buildings into community assets. These initiatives all resonated closely with the goals of the Local Foods, Local Places program, which are to create:

- More economic opportunities for local farmers and businesses.
- Better access to healthy, local food, especially among disadvantaged groups.
- Revitalized downtowns, main streets, and neighborhoods.

The Local Foods, Local Places program is supported by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the Delta Regional Authority (DRA). Duck Hill was one of 16 communities across the United States selected from more than 80 applicants to participate in the program in 2018.

In addition to getting selected for the Local Foods, Local Places award, the town, ACER, and Montgomery Communities United for Prosperity have applied for other assistance to help with the ASEEDS initiatives, including the Delta Regional Authority’s Creative Place Making for the Arts program. These organizations are working to move Duck Hill closer to the goal of renovating and repurposing Binford High School (Figure 4) into the Lucy E. Campbell and Lloyd T. Binford Center for Arts, Culture and Social Impact. The Local Foods, Local Places workshop in June 2018 was an important part of this process, and the resulting action plan addresses some critical next steps.



Figure 4 – Panorama picture of the auditorium inside the Lloyd Binford School Building. Image credit: EPR

As part of the Local Foods, Local Places application process, a steering committee was formed in Duck Hill. The committee (Figure 5) is comprised of a variety of community partners that have already been part of the ongoing ASEEDS initiative. They were supported by a technical assistance team comprised of consultants and federal agency partners (Figure 6). The steering committee expressed a desire to continue working on the food and place related aspects of the ASEEDS initiative and identified these focus areas for the workshop:

- Engage and empower the community at large to be a part of the process of community development and sustainability.
- Promote a clear understanding of the importance of local food, including nutrition and health awareness.
- Identify strategies for applying grass roots strategies that will improve the conditions of buildings and infrastructure.

The remainder of this report and appendices document the engagement process, the workshop activities, and most importantly, the outcome: a community action plan to achieve Duck Hill’s goals.

Local Foods, Local Places Steering Committee

- **Romona Taylor Williams**, Project Lead, ACER
- **Joey Cooley**, Mayor, Town of Duck Hill
- **Al White**, Executive Director, ACER
- **Shernell Everett**, Board Co-Chair, North Montgomery Communities United for Prosperity (M-CUP)
- **Melba Rogers**, Board Co-Chair, (M-CUP)
- **Rieko Wells**, VP Community Development Manager, State Bank and Trust; MCUP Board Member
- **Steve Russell**, Executive Director, North Central Planning and Development District

Figure 5 – Local Foods, Local Places steering committee members

Local Foods, Local Places Technical Assistance Team

- **Lucretian Hamilton**, EPA, Office of Community Revitalization, Washington, D.C.
- **Deborah Ortiz**, EPA Region 4, Office of Environmental Justice and Sustainability, Atlanta, GA
- **Rafaela Moura**, EPA Region 4: Office of the Regional Administrator, Atlanta, GA
- **William Kenneth Dean**, EPA-MDOT Liaison, EPA Region 4, Jackson, MS/Atlanta, GA
- **Gregory Dale**, USDA Rural Development
- **Justin Wilkes**, USDA Rural Development, Jackson, MS
- **Ron Batcher**, Architect, USDA Agricultural Marketing Service, Washington, D.C.
- **Jerrie Magruder**, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Jackson, MS
- **Ziva James**, HUD
- **Gloria Huang**, Economic Development Administration, Atlanta, GA
- **Spencer Lucker**, Delta Regional Authority, Washington, D.C.
- **Randy Jansen**, Federal Highway Administration, Jackson, MS
- **David Guthrie**, CDC, Atlanta, GA
- **Jason Espie**, EPR PC (technical assistance lead consultant), Charlottesville, VA
- **Ebony Walden**, Ebony Walden Consulting (technical assistance consultant) Richmond, VA
- **Alan Steinbeck**, 3TP Ventures (technical assistance consultant), Chapel Hill, NC

Figure 6 – The Local Foods, Local Places technical assistance team consists of federal agency representatives and technical assistance consultants.

ENGAGEMENT

The technical assistance engagement process for Local Foods, Local Places has three phases, illustrated in Figure 7. The plan phase consists of three preparation conference calls with the steering committee and technical assistance team to clarify goals and arrange workshop logistics. The convene phase includes the effort’s capstone event—a two-day workshop in the community. The act phase includes three follow-up conference calls to finalize a community action plan and strategize on how to maintain momentum generated during the workshop. The community workshop was held over a two-day period from June 28-29, 2018, and the activities on those days are described below. Workshop exercise results are summarized in **Appendix A**, workshop sign-in sheets are provided in **Appendix B**, a workshop photo album is provided in **Appendix C**, a data profile in **Appendix D**, funding resources in **Appendix E**, and general references in **Appendix F**.

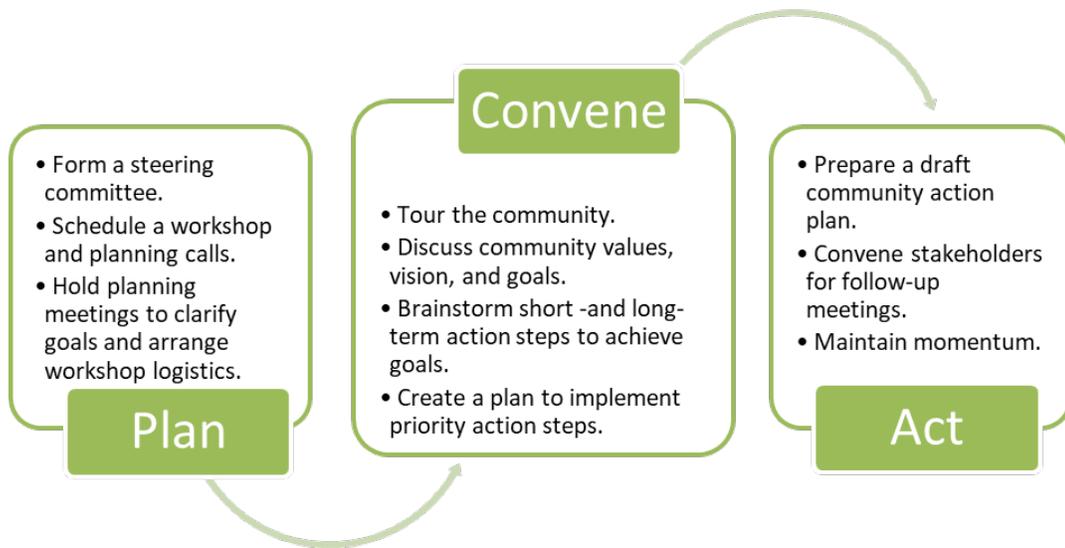


Figure 7 -- Local Foods, Local Places technical assistance process diagram

COMMUNITY TOUR

In advance of the first community session on June 28th, the local steering committee conducted a driving tour of Duck Hill’s neighborhoods, downtown, community assets, and historical sites. Visiting federal partners and the technical assistance team joined the tour.



Figure 8 – Renovation and re-use of the Binford School Building was a major focus of discussion at the workshop. Image credit: 3TP Ventures

The tour began at the Lloyd T. Binford High School building (built 1936). The building has been vacant for several years due to school consolidation, and it is currently owned by the town. The adaptive reuse of the building is central to the many elements of Duck Hill's community development and sustainability strategy. The plan is to turn the building into the Lucie E. Campbell and Lloyd T. Binford Center for Arts, Culture and Social Impact. The social impact element of the programming will seek to address issues of health, education, economic opportunities, and safety/crime reduction. Elements of the center will include studios, makers' spaces, performing arts facilities, and community meeting space. There is also the potential for a history room and cultural center designed for preservation and presentation of the community's history. Spaces and activities for the community's youth are also being planned as there is the need for structured activity after school and in the evenings. One wing of the old school—an addition to the original school—could potentially become a new Town Hall. At the time of the workshop, a master planning effort was underway to include exercise equipment and walking trails on the campus that would connect with a larger trail and sidewalk system on adjacent properties and streets.

The tour included information about an innovative, low-cost stormwater management technique. The approach is being taken at the front of the Binford building along both sides of Main Street. Localized flooding risk is being mitigated through new trenching, drainage pipes and gravel fill (see Figure 11). The installations collect, store and filter water on the way to a primary drainage ditch just east on Main Street.

After spending time at the Binford building site, the tour proceeded around town to view several important community assets. This included many of the neighborhood streets and some specific residential developments that told the story of past housing decisions and current housing issues. There has not been

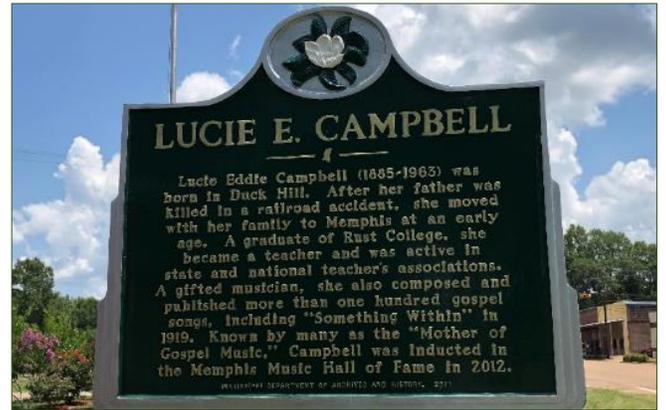


Figure 9 – Lucie E. Campbell was a nationally known performing artist from Duck Hill, and a strong source of local pride. Many Delta towns honor and celebrate their local artists and musicians, who are a rich part of the regions', and our nation's, cultural identity and heritage. The music and blues of the Delta draw thousands of tourists from around the world every year. Image credit: EPR

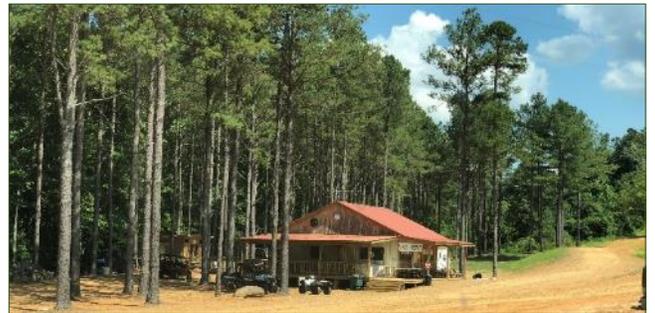


Figure 10 -- The tour stopped by the ATV recreation park just outside of town. This park represents an economic driver for the town. Image credit: EPR



Figure 11 - Stormwater drainage being installed. Image credit: EPR

much housing investment at all in the past several decades. Many of the properties need rehabilitation or redevelopment. There are some vacant sites and lots throughout town that would be appropriate for infill development. Many neighborhood areas are somewhat isolated from the town's assets and services due to lack of sidewalks and the fact that some residents that do not own cars. There are plans for adding sidewalks to many of the streets, but funding has yet to be secured for these needs. Another significant issue in the neighborhoods is flood risk. Many houses were sited in flood-prone areas, and there is a general lack of stormwater infrastructure to protect against flooding.

The tour included a stop in downtown. The downtown business district has the majority of businesses in town but does not have a full set of services for the community. One common issue raised by community members is only having one gas station. Many of the shopping needs of the community are going unmet, despite there being a small, relatively new discount store at the edge of town.

There are two important sites to the west of town. One is the privately-owned ATV park that attracts many visitors throughout the year. There is also the Grassroots Blues Festival Site that is home to the annual music event.

The tour also included a trip to the 1937 lynching site off Highway 404. The site of the lynching and the site of the robbery that led to the arrest of the two persons lynched are currently unmarked. This event received national attention as it happened at a time of national policy debate given the violence happening in Nazi-occupied Germany against Jews and other groups. The community is working to better document the events and be able to tell the story of what happened there.



Figure 12 – Chief Duck and the park between the commercial area of downtown and the rail line. Image credit: 3TP Ventures

Tour Highlights and Observations

- The Binford High School adaptive use project is a major undertaking but will be a transformative catalyst for community development and further investment
- Much of the community's history is not fully documented but needs to be preserved and reconciled through present day initiatives
- There is a need for structured activities and programs for the youth and a desire for intergenerational activities
- The US 51 corridor is a food desert for its entire stretch in Montgomery County
- There are a few properties in town for community use and local food production
- Housing is aging, and many members of the community cannot afford maintenance
- More sidewalks and transportation services are needed
- The stormwater system is not adequate, and there are flooding issues

Figure 13 -- Key takeaways from the community tour and observations on the key community issues partners are working to address.

VISION AND VALUES – DAY ONE

Over forty residents and community stakeholders attended the first public session of the workshop on the evening of June 28th. Ramona Williams, project consultant and local point of contact, welcomed attendees and spoke about the steering committee’s objective in bringing the community together for this event. Ramona focused on the progress made by ASEEDS, noted the current installation of stormwater mitigation measures, the visit of the Mississippi State architecture design studio, and the desire to make progress on the Binford building, community gardens, farmers markets, and other health- and food-related place-making efforts in that part of town. She called upon participants to utilize the LFLP technical assistance opportunity to further the collaborative, communicative, and systematic approach in order to work more effectively and quickly towards building a more sustainable, healthy, and prosperous Duck Hill.

After initial remarks, the technical assistance team introduced the Local Foods, Local Places program with a short presentation. The team highlighted the elements and benefits of a local food system, as well as the importance of incorporating equity as a measure of the system’s success. Additionally, the team shared demographic and regional data that demonstrated useful baseline measurements of health and wealth. More publicly available data about Duck Hill and Montgomery County can be found in **Appendix D**.

The primary purpose of the community meeting was to hear from residents and other stakeholders about their hopes for the future of food and revitalization in Duck Hill.

The technical assistance team led attendees through a “This I believe...” exercise designed to bring up core values of the community (Figure 16). The group generated a lot of energy with this exercise and overarching themes emerged that are important for the



Figure 14 – The community gathering welcomed Duck Hill residents, state officials, and food system and health stakeholders from around the region. Image credit: EPR



Figure 15 – A delicious meal was generously cooked by the steering committee members and friends and served outside the gym. Image credit: EPR

This I believe about Duck Hill...

... It is a great place to live; It has the potential to do great things; We have many gifts and talents; We have the resources we need to succeed; We can do great things if we work together; We can integrate the youth and the seniors; Persistence can carry us forward; The money is usually there, you just have to ask for it and have a good idea.

Figure 16 -- Vision and Values Exercise Results called “This I Believe” where participants were asked to complete the statement “This I believe about my community.” Above are some of the words that came from this exercise that reflect the positive aspects that framed the workshops action planning sessions on day two.

Aspirations and Ideas for the Future

Community Center

- Performing arts center and agricultural center
- High-tech training center
- Fun places and things to experience
- Youth center for healthy eating

Food

- Community garden
- Farmers market
- Selling food from local farmers
- Healthy youth bar
- Youth fruit salad competition
- Americanized Mexican food truck
- Fast food restaurants replaced with grocery stores

Downtown

- Grocery store
- New restaurant
- Coffee shop with breakfast service
- Community health center
- Another gas station
- Clothes store
- Train to hill trail (and 10,000 visitors)
- 5 kilometer walk and grass roots blues show
- Recreational buildings
- More festivals
- More activities

Figure 17 – Summaries of thoughts about the future grouped by category: community center, food and downtown.

community to keep in mind as it moves forward with all its goals. These themes are embracing the community's diversity, passion, and youth; recognizing and leveraging a history of coming together to solve problems; collaborating for better utilization of resources; and building upon the community's beauty and values for resilience and an enduring quality of life.

The technical team also asked workshop participants to write aspirational headlines for 5-10 years into the future around the topics of the Community Center (future Binford/Lucie Campbell Center), food, and downtown. Their thoughts are summarized in Figure 17. The night concluded with a review of the workshop goal areas. People who would not be attending on day two were encouraged to give comments or suggest actions.



Figure 18 – Participants on day one at the Duck Hill Missionary Baptist Church. Image credit: EPR

ACTION PLANNING - DAY TWO

Case Studies

The second day of the workshop began with examples of strategies used by other communities to advance their food system and place-making initiatives. The Richmond Food Justice Alliance work in Richmond, Virginia, was presented highlighting local, neighborhood efforts to increase food access and health in lower-income, high-minority areas. Other case studies included arts-oriented place-making and job training programs of the Griot and Meraki groups in Clarksdale, Mississippi. An example was presented from High Point, North Carolina, of the library as an anchor for neighborhood health, food, community gathering, and revitalization along with a series on organizing farmers markets. Around each of these case studies there were plenary discussions about lessons learned and takeaways for what Duck Hill wants to accomplish.

Asset Mapping and Idea Generation

Workshop attendees participated in an asset mapping exercise designed to generate ideas for the community in advance of action planning. Participants were asked to identify quick fixes (red), food system elements (yellow), favorite things (blue), and opportunities (green). Working in groups around maps, participants plotted and inventoried locations downtown, city-wide, and across the region. An example of the downtown map is included below and the full set of asset maps are included in **Appendix A**.



Figure 19 – The morning of day two started with a recap of night one and case studies from other communities, interspersed with discussion. Image credit: EPR



Figure 20 – Day two asset mapping. Image credit: EPR



Figure 21 – Mayor Cooley of Duck Hill reports out from his asset mapping group exercise. Image credit: EPR

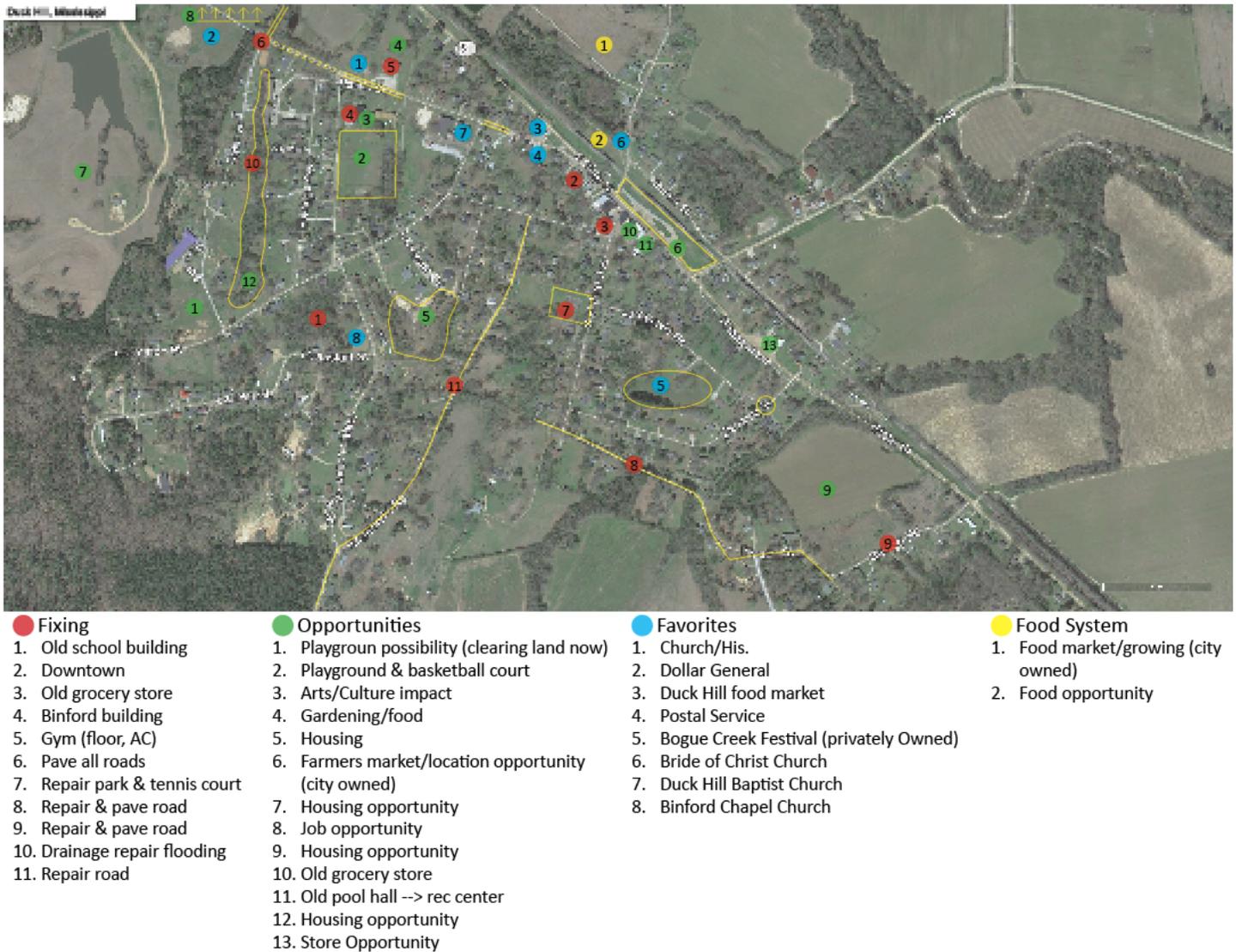


Figure 22 - Example of the results of the asset mapping exercise which was designed to generate ideas and discussion in advance of the action planning session. The other two maps generated can be found in Appendix A.

ACTION PLAN

The action planning process during the workshop consisted of a few phases of work. First there was a brainstorming session, where participants were asked to write down on post-it notes an action in a complete sentence for one or more goals. These post-it notes were then placed on posters with goal statements. As they were placed, the duplicate actions, or similar ones were clustered and/or merged. The next phase included a dot voting exercise where participants were given a set number of dots and were asked to place them next to specific actions, or clusters of actions, to indicate which ones either were most important or needed immediate attention. The final phase included small working groups, assessing the prioritization voting and transferring the top 2-5 actions onto a blank action planning poster, identifying actions first, and then completing the details of each one, such as importance, timeframe, lead role, etc. The goals and supporting

actions are listed below. The tables that follow provide additional detail for each action.

- Goal 1 – Transform the Binford Building and grounds into a center for arts, culture, and social impact.
 - *Action 1.1* – Organize community cleanup days for the Binford Building and surrounding property.
 - *Action 1.2* – Develop a community garden on the Binford School property.
 - *Action 1.3* – Identify funding for the renovation of the Binford School into a center for arts, culture, and social impact to include educational and agricultural programming.
 - *Action 1.4* – Obtain historical landmark designation for Duck Hill buildings focusing on the Binford School.
- Goal 2 – Identify strategies for applying grassroots approaches that will improve the condition of buildings and infrastructure.
 - *Action 2.1* – Organize a team to assess and propose a route for the community walking trail.
 - *Action 2.2* – Research current university programs that provide student work for green technologies for the Binford complex and roads.
 - *Action 2.3* – Teach youth and residents conservationism, sustainability, and green technology for buildings and public infrastructure and develop research and training modules and curriculum for top priority green technologies to implement in Duck Hill.
- Goal 3 – Promote a clear understanding of the importance of local foods, including nutrition and health awareness.
 - *Action 3.1* – Develop and host a series of community events that engage the young, the old, growers, gardeners, and any other interested parties to come together around the subjects of food, health, and helping each other thrive and survive.
 - *Action 3.2* – Engage the churches to promote healthy foods and physical activity for general health and wellbeing.
 - *Action 3.3* – Formalize and expand a backyard gardeners’ network to activate community members already engaged as advocates and teachers to establish a community teaching and demonstration garden at the gym or Binford property.
- Goal 4 – Engage and empower the community.
 - *Action 4.1* – Make the local public aware of the Achieving Sustainability through Education and Economic Development Solutions (ASEEDS) initiative.
 - *Action 4.2* – Develop a network map of resources provided in the community and examine gaps.
 - *Action 4.3* – Form a local team to do outreach to state and federal agencies.
 - *Action 4.4* – Develop a list of performing and visual artists within Duck Hill and the region.
 - *Action 4.5* – Decide on a working group to continue this process for each goal of the Local Foods, Local Places action plan.

GOAL 1: Transform the Binford Building and grounds into a center for arts, culture, and social impact.

The Binford Building and former school complex is currently owned by the Town of Duck Hill, and its restoration and re-purposing offers many opportunities for hosting community events and functions. What is

envisioned is a community center for arts, culture, and social impact; a place that people use and value—where they congregate and hold events and training sessions; and a potential site to house municipal offices. It is adjacent to the gym and land that could become gardens. The site has huge potential for transformation into a valuable community asset. The actions listed below describe some near-term efforts that can be taken towards this transformation.

Action 1.1: Organize community cleanup days for the Binford Building and surrounding property.

What this is and why it is important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides community ownership. • Creates a vision for the community in increases buy-in to the project. • Brings the community together for a common goal. • Serves as a necessary step to meet other goals. • Facilitates investment. • Engages youth in community service and pride.
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A community cleanup group has been established. • An initial walk-through and game plan for the cleanup has been established. • The site is cleaned (construction cleanup) and prepared for the event. • The event is repeatable on an annual basis.
Timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 month for pre-cleanup and organizing community volunteers • 3-6 months for final cleanup
Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Town of Duck Hill • Organized community volunteer group • ASEEDS Creek Rangers • ACER/M-CUP
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Millennium Men’s and Women’s Club • Local church groups and members • County supervisors • ASEEDS Partnership
Costs and/or resources needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City equipment • Waste removal fees • Potential contract for one or more major pieces of work • Supplies
Possible funding sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community fundraising • Local financial institutions • Entergy • Town of Duck Hill • County Supervisors • ASEEDS Partnership

Action 1.2: Develop a community garden on the Binford School property.

What this is and why it is important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides healthy food. • Encourages and facilitates healthy eating. • Gives people a reason to come to the school. • Promotes community involvement. • Provides an opportunity for revenue generation.
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gardening programs have been established. • The plantings grow. • The yield of the first harvest. • The number of families who use the garden. • The number of families fed. • Farmers market sales. • The number of food producers for summer programs and student education.
Timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1-7 months to establish planting beds • 7-12 months for the first crop
Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Foods Local Places steering committee • Charles Houston, Vickie Roberts, Romona Taylor Williams • Individual gardeners and farmers • Napoleon Grantham • Canary Grantham
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town of Duck Hill • Sharee McCarroll • Millennium Men’s and Women’s Clubs • Mississippi State Extension • Local church groups and members • David Perkes, Mississippi State University College of Architecture, Art + Design
Costs and/or resources needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design plan • Equipment and building materials • Soil and seeds • Greenhouse or hoop house for starting seeds
Possible funding sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • United States Department of Agriculture High Tunnel System Initiative • Ron Batcher (architectural assistance) – United States Department of Agriculture • Delta Regional Authority’s Local Food, Local Places grant • Home improvement stores’ donations • Grassroots fundraising • Local financial institutions • Town of Duck Hill • County Supervisors

Action 1.3: Identify funding for the renovation of the Binford School into a center for arts, culture, and social impact to include educational and agricultural programming.

What this is and why it is important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishes community goals and realizes visions. • Provides community benefits. • Facilitates historic preservation of the building. • Provides activities for persons of all ages.
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding is realized. • The building renovations are completed. • The building and facilities are being utilized. • There is an increase in community participation.
Timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1-12 months for submitting funding applications • 1-3 months to acquire funding
Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Romona Taylor Williams • Al White • Town of Duck Hill
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mississippi State Extension • Mississippi State Development Authority • Mississippi Main Street Program • David Perkes, Mississippi State University College of Architecture, Art + Design • Local churches • County Supervisors • Mississippi Hill Heritage Alliance • Delta State University’s Delta Music Institute
Costs and/or resources needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mississippi Preservation Archives and History • Paid project manager to see the project through • Hard and soft costs for building renovation • Pre-development funds and general operating capital
Possible funding sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development – Community Facilities grants and loans • Delta Regional Authority’s Local Foods, Local Places grant • Financial institutions • Foundations • Town of Duck Hill • County Supervisors • Main Street America

Action 1.4: Obtain historical landmark designation for Duck Hill buildings focusing on the Binford School.

What this is and why it is important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitates the acquisition of additional funding. • Helps to achieve renovation goals.
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A historical landmark designation has been obtained. • Tourism increases. • Community traffic increases. • The community tax base increases.
Timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1-2 years per structure
Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Romona Taylor Williams • Al White • Town of Duck Hill
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Duck Hill Preservation Community • Bonita Stewart, Bonita Stewart Architecture • Mississippi State Historic Preservation Program
Costs and/or resources needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time to complete documentation and designation process • Consultant fees • General operating costs
Possible funding sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historical Preservation Society • Mississippi Archives and History • Appalachian Regional Commission • Mississippi Hill Heritage Alliance • Mississippi Development Authority

Goal 2: Identify strategies for applying grassroots approaches that will improve the condition of buildings and infrastructure.

Beyond the specific activities of Goal 1 and the Binford building and property, there are several community improvement actions that were discussed that could be grassroots-organized, and direct approaches to clean up and fix specific buildings or work together on new assets such as walking trails. A lot is already being done to address some of the flooding from stormwater that occurs on Main Street, but more efforts may be needed.

Action 2.1: Organize a team to assess and propose a route for the community walking trail.

What this is and why it is important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides an early success, which builds interest and morale among the community members for the future trail. • Presents and resolves issues in master planning the site for other uses.
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Action 2.1: Organize a team to assess and propose a route for the community walking trail.

Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A team of at least 3 people has been organized. • Potential properties and land owners have been identified. • Potential routes have been mapped and determined feasible. • Cost estimates and funding strategies are completed.
Timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 months to assemble a team • 6 months to generate a proposal
Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mayor Joey Cooley (5K walk) • Shernell Everett
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landowners • County person • Eddie (owner of Powell Mountain) • The current organizers of walks • Melba Rogers • Nannette Laster • North Central Planning and Development District
Costs and/or resources needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concept design and drawings needed to construct facility • Time for organizing and documenting team’s process and findings
Possible funding sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delta Regional Authority • Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks

Action 2.2: Research current university programs that provide student interns for green technologies for the Binford complex and roads.

What this is and why it is important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable development includes stormwater management (reducing flooding).
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find at least one university and one student to conduct the research. • Identify programs and initiatives at Mississippi State, Jackson State, and Mississippi Valley State, including engineering, architecture, building construction and planning.
Timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fall 2018 (search) • January 2019 (start research) • May 2019 (research done) • Follow up collaborations established prior to the 2019-2020 school year
Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MCUP / ASEEDS
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mississippi State College of Architecture and Design • Sustainability works • ASEED partners and sponsors

Action 2.2: Research current university programs that provide student interns for green technologies for the Binford complex and roads.

Costs and/or resources needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local point of contact time to reach out to schools and organize information Student time to perform research
Possible funding sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> University-funded classes and research

Action 2.3: Teach youth and residents conservationism, sustainability, and green technology for buildings and public infrastructure and develop research and training modules and curriculum for top priority green technologies to implement in Duck Hill.

What this is and why it is important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trains and hires locals who can apply these trades elsewhere. Builds local skills and capacity. Saves money. Emphasizes green infrastructure and sustainability practices, i.e., buildings and roads.
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Priority technologies have been developed. The first class of workers is trained and certified (5-10 people).
Timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Get research from student by fall 2019. Start this process summer 2019, complete by end of calendar year 2019. Identify needs and establish training in first half of 2020. Recruit and train first class in 2020.
Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MCUP / ASEEDS
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality Delta Electric Town of Duck Hill (roads) Small businesses Groundwork USA (youth/green)
Costs and/or resources needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time and money to create program design and budget Cost of training Cost of projects including materials and labor
Possible funding sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> United States Department of Energy United States Environmental Protection Agency Delta Regional Authority University partnerships USDA Rural Development revolving loan fund for specific building, site, and infrastructure improvements

Goal 3: Promote a clear understanding of the importance of local foods, including nutrition and health awareness.

Duck Hill has been focusing on a number of community-driven initiatives that include sustainability, notably through the Achieving Sustainably through Education, Economic Development Solutions (ASEEDS) program. It is one of six communities chosen by the Southeastern Sustainability Director’s Network, the Kendeda Fund, and the Delta Regional Authority to invest in much needed planning and infrastructure. Mayor Joey Cooley describes ASEEDS as a program that will plant the seeds for creative place-making around arts and sustainability. A large part of sustainability is also health and food, which led the town to apply for the Local Foods, Local Places technical assistance program. This goal is focused on broadening access to healthy food, local food, and nutrition awareness and education in the community. Food is life and a catalyst that brings people together.

Action 3.1: Develop and host a series of community events that engage the young, the old, growers, gardeners, and any other interested parties to come together around the subjects of food, health, and helping each other thrive and survive.

<p>What this is and why it is important</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Some ideas for a series of community events focused on food could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Participating in October Fest and Harvest Fest. ○ Hosting a collard greens fest. ○ A 5K walk ending in a pot luck dinner and music. ○ Programming activities and engagement. ○ Hosting a taste testing of locally grown food as part of a health event. ○ Creating a healthy youth club of students who can learn about foods grown in a community garden and how to prepare them. ○ Developing a network mapping database of who is doing what in the area (identifying gardening in the community, engaging in lunches, chat and chews, grub and grow activities) ● These events are important because they: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provide an opportunity for civic interaction over food and community. ○ Create space for dialogue. ○ Build social capital. ○ Generate interest in people. ○ Provide opportunities for learning and sharing.
<p>Measures of success</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A person has been identified to organize the events. ● The number of events held per year increases, e.g., four meetings or events per year. ● Events are held quarterly or in conjunction with other events.
<p>Timeframe</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tie into existing milestones and coordinate with ASEEDS’ sustainability plan timeline.
<p>Lead</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ASEEDS Partnership, Choices for Kids and Families Health Center, Darlene Allen, Director Senior Services, North Central Planning and Development District (Shernell Everett will facilitate engagement with churches).

Action 3.1: Develop and host a series of community events that engage the young, the old, growers, gardeners, and any other interested parties to come together around the subjects of food, health, and helping each other thrive and survive.

Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACER • M-CUP • Millennial Women • Working groups for each goal from the Local Foods, Local Places participants
Costs and/or resources needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer time • Food donations from growers • Printing • Outreach (flier distribution) • Refreshments for planning and community engagement meetings • Event expenses
Possible funding sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial institutions • Local business sponsors • Churches • Civic organizations • Grassroots fundraisers

Action 3.2: Engage the churches to promote healthy foods and physical activity for general health and wellbeing.

What this is and why it is important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faith is part of most people’s lives here. • Churches are important and are organized. • There are 11 churches in Duck Hill, and the group Christian Women on a Mission could be an effective group for collaborating on food-related issues and increasing the options of healthy food at church events. • The Holy Ground Collaborative is an example that could be a model for partnering with churches and working with ministers.
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a coordinator. • There is a bulletin for announcements at churches. • Most churches in Duck Hill are engaged in some way. • A key person at each church who will be involved and committed to help with activities and outreach has been identified.
Timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tie into existing milestones and coordinate with ASEEDS’ sustainability plan timeline .
Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shernell Everett and Christian Women on a Mission • Stephanie Hollis and Nora White (need to contact)

Action 3.2: Engage the churches to promote healthy foods and physical activity for general health and wellbeing.

Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASEEDS Partnership • M-CUP • Millennial Men’s and Women’s Clubs • Choices for Kids and Families Health Center • Unity in the Community Working Group (4th of July)
Costs and/or resources needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office space • Supplies to operate • Volunteer time
Possible funding sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership with the Urban Institute • Mississippi State Department of Health

Action 3.3: Formalize and expand a backyard gardeners’ network to activate community members already engaged as advocates and teachers to participate in a community teaching and demonstration garden at the gym or Binford property.

What this is and why it is important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand the existing network of vegetable growers in and around Duck Hill by adding such things as off-season (fall and winter) hoop houses (high tunnels). • It would involve reaching out to area growers to gauge their interest in selling their produce at a future farmers market in Duck Hill. • Establish a place where people could come together to work and learn about growing, share knowledge, and raise produce together. • It is an opportunity to utilize services provided by Mississippi State Extension Service. • Identifies master growers and finds champions. • Teaches skills and connects mentors to mentees. • Empowers people to grow their own food, raising self-esteem and pride in self-sufficiency. • Connects people and creates efficiencies through shared knowledge, tools and resources. • The regional food policy council will examine the system from a holistic perspective to analyze and make recommendations for public policy by evaluating the local food shed, identifying food sourcing opportunities as an economic development driver, and working with local growers to develop sustainable growing practices and lay the foundation for public policy. • Examine feasibility of a food hub in Montgomery County.
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the end of every harvest season there is a showing of products. • The number of members. • The number of gardens per year.
Timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tie into existing milestones and coordinate with ASEEDS’ sustainability plan timeline.
Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Canary (Master Gardener) and team of gardeners

Action 3.3: Formalize and expand a backyard gardeners’ network to activate community members already engaged as advocates and teachers to participate in a community teaching and demonstration garden at the gym or Binford property.

Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASEEDS Partnership • Montgomery County Extension • Master gardeners’ network • ASEEDS Creek Rangers • Any interested Local Foods, Local Places workshop participants
Costs and/or resources needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High tunnels • Tools • Equipment for a demonstration garden • Coordinator • Marketing materials, printing • Refreshments for planning meetings
Possible funding sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • United States Department of Agriculture High Tunnel System Initiative • Delta Regional Authority Local Food, Local Places grant • Home improvement stores’ donations • Financial institutions • Town of Duck Hill • County Supervisors

Goal 4: Engage and empower the community.

The ASEEDS initiative is a two-year program that has a number of activities that seek to engage and empower community members to improve aspects of their community. In February of 2018, an ASEEDS community engagement forum was held, and now the Local Foods, Local Places workshop is seen as a continuation of the same effort of community engagement. Goal 4 focuses on keeping the momentum of ASEEDS and incorporating food and creative place-making as part of the engagement and empowerment efforts of the community at a very grassroots level. Working with people takes time, effort, and continual attention. The actions below address some next steps to keep the momentum of ASEEDS and Local Foods, Local Places going.

Action 4.1: Make the local public aware of the Achieving Sustainability through Education and Economic Development Solutions (ASEEDS) initiative.

What this is and why it is important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps empower community members. • Highlights the benefits and opportunities of the program. • Acts as resource guide for project development and program participation.
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A strategy for communications is complete, including newspapers, flyers, and social media. • A website is completed.

Action 4.1: Make the local public aware of the Achieving Sustainability through Education and Economic Development Solutions (ASEEDS) initiative.

Timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commence activities immediately. • Communications strategy complete within 3 months. • Website complete within 6 months. • Ongoing communication is needed to succeed.
Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shernell Everett, M-CUP • Romona Taylor Williams, ASEEDS Project Lead
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Churches • Schools • City organizations • Community leaders • Radio and TV stations
Costs and/or resources needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part-time communications lead identified. • Volunteers that serve in the communications network. • Publication costs for materials. • Maintenance costs for website.
Possible funding sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should be established as part of ASEEDS' annual budget

Action 4.2: Develop a network map of resources provided in the community and examine gaps.

What this is and why it is important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defines who is currently at the table doing community work. • Reveals potential project, program, and funding partnerships.
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Network map of resources is published and services are being used.
Timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define format and scope within 3 months. • Publish first version within 9 months.
Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Romona Taylor Williams
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASEEDS Partnership • University student interns
Costs and/or resources needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time and publication costs
Possible funding sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should be established as part of ASEEDS' annual budget.

Action 4.3: Form a local team to do outreach to state and federal agencies.

What this is and why it is important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows proactive outreach to learn what programs are available. • Reinforces community priorities for projects and programs. • Garners feedback from potential partners on the feasibility and scope of initiatives.
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A running list of agencies to meet with has been developed. • Formal tracking of funding cycles of potential partners has begun.
Timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4-6 months for initial push
Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town of Duck Hill, Mayor Joey Cooley or designated person(s) • ACER, ASEEDS Partnership, MCUP
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Justin Wilkes – United States Department of Agriculture – Mississippi • Gregory Dale – United States Department of Agriculture • Mississippi Development Authority
Costs and/or resources needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time and facilitators expense dedicated to meetings and coordination
Possible funding sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASEEDS Partnership, Fundraising

Action 4.4: Develop a list of performing and visual artists within Duck Hill and the region.

What this is and why it is important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies artists and facilitates participation in community initiatives. • Distributes information in the Campbell Center for community and visitors.
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The task is completed and published. • Ongoing through documentary.
Timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List to be completed within 4-6 months. • Engagement will be an ongoing process.
Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Littrell Lane, ASEEDS Arts Director • Romona Taylor Williams, ASEEDS Project Lead
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Duck Hill community • David Perkes, Mississippi State University College of Architecture, Art + Design • Ilene Berman, MFA, St. Louis University (Artistic Consultant)
Costs and/or resources needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program expenses
Possible funding sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foundations • Mississippi Arts Commission • Business community

Action 4.5: Decide on a working group to continue this process for each goal of the Local Foods, Local Places action plan.

What this is and why it is important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensures that progress is being made. • Provides structure in decision making. • Creates forum for formal organization around specific projects and events. • Promotes exchange of ideas across organizations.
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly meetings are held for the first ninety days, then quarterly to report out. • Continuous coordination for at least one year. • An accounting of implementation success is reported back to the community and Local Foods, Local Places partners.
Timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings to commence immediately following the Local Foods, Local Places workshop
Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Romona Taylor Williams, ASEEDS Project Lead
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASEEDS Partnership, • Local stakeholders • Faith-based community,
Costs and/or resources needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program coordination expenses
Possible funding sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diverse funding sources

IMPLEMENTATION AND NEXT STEPS

Duck Hill stakeholders are working to advance the goals and actions described in the previous section. The Steering committee is working with the Delta Regional Authority, which made available \$15,000 in assistance for Duck Hill to implement elements of this action plan. The project stakeholders met prior to the last conference call associated with the Local Foods, Local Places technical assistance and identified priorities for using the assistance and preliminarily intend to use the implementation funding for supplies and equipment for a community garden and farmers market either at the Binford property or adjacent to the gymnasium on Main Street. In addition to using these funds, the local stakeholders are raising money to rehabilitate the Binford Building and open the Lucie E. Campbell and Lloyd T. Binford Center for Arts, Culture and Social Impact. There is also a need to prioritize raising operating funds for the ASEEDS initiative to spearhead project implementation.

Following the 2-day Local Food Local Places workshop, the ASEEDS Partnership hosted a creative place-making community visioning workshop centered around Main Street revitalization, adaptation, and resiliency. The sessions were held September 25-27, 2018, supported by a grant from the Delta Regional Authority Creative Place Making Program, Southeastern Sustainability Directors’ Network, and Kendeda Fund. The workshops

were facilitated by Alex Holland and Libby Crimmings of McClure Engineering, and ASEEDS partner, Alex Score and Lauren Lynch of EcoAdapt, a non-profit climate organization out of Seattle, Washington. Each of these technical assistance processes is expected to yield a set of plans that will eventually be incorporated into a consolidated Livable Communities and Sustainability plan for the Town of Duck Hill.

APPENDICES

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