



Community Action Plan for Hopewell, Virginia

LOCAL FOODS, LOCAL PLACES TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

November 2018

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

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COMMUNITY STORY

Located about 20 miles south of the state capitol of Richmond, the city of Hopewell, Virginia, is a city of just over 22,000 residents. The oldest part of Hopewell—City Point—was founded by English colonists in 1613.¹

Hopewell has a rich history tied to significant events in U.S. history. The coastal banks of Hopewell were the site of skirmishes during the Revolutionary War, and during the Civil War, Union forces occupied the town while General Ulysses S. Grant directed the siege of Petersburg from the nearby Appomattox Manor.² In 1914, the DuPont Company constructed the world's largest guncotton plant in the city to supply belligerents in World War I.³ With its manufacturing growth, the small town, with a population of just 300 people in 1910, was employing over 40,000 by 1915. Hopewell incorporated in 1916, and manufacturing remained its economic backbone after World War I, with several companies replacing DuPont as key employers after the guncotton plant shut down.⁴ Some of these manufacturing plants remain today.

Although still an industrial city, Hopewell has struggled economically in recent years due to an outmigration of residents to surrounding suburbs, leading to loss of population. Before the addition of a local Main Street program in 2011, downtown infrastructure was severely deteriorating with multiple blighted properties, close to a 50 percent vacancy rate, and pervasive loitering.⁵ The city's poverty and unemployment rates have remained well above the state average.⁶ The city's residents also face several health challenges, with more than two thirds of the population classified as overweight or obese.⁷



Figure 1 – Businesses like Guncotton Coffee and Gallery have opened in renovated historic buildings, helping to draw people downtown and enliven the street.



Figure 2 – Hopewell's location on the Appomattox River offers an opportunity to promote outdoor recreation and healthy living, including with a planned river-walk connecting downtown to the City Marina and hospital.

¹ City of Hopewell. "City History." <http://hopewellva.gov/city-history/>. Accessed Oct. 16, 2018.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Hopewell Local Foods, Local Places Application

⁶ U.S. Census Bureau. "2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates." <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>. Accessed Sep. 4, 2018.

⁷ Healthy Food Access Portal. "Research Your Community." <http://www.healthyfoodaccess.org/access-101/research-your-community>. Accessed Sep. 4, 2018.

In the face of these health and economic challenges, the Hopewell Downtown Partnership formed in 2007 to help reverse deterioration and protect downtown's historic structures and cultural relevancy to the region.⁸ In partnership with the city, the Downtown Partnership helped spur the renovation of numerous blighted properties and streetscape improvements. These rehabilitation efforts have helped draw new businesses to downtown, including several food-oriented businesses. To help build on this success, the Hopewell Downtown Partnership funded a feasibility study of a kitchen incubator that could provide space, equipment, and technical assistance to aspiring local food entrepreneurs. A one-story (plus basement) 14,000-square-foot city-owned building downtown is a possible site for the incubator. This location could also support a companion café and market to highlight locally grown and processed artisan and healthy food options, providing kitchen users a direct retail outlet, further contributing to the downtown's renaissance.

The kitchen incubator project would complement other initiatives in the city, including the Downtown Partnership's farmers market, held monthly year-round, and Third Thursday Open-air Marketplace events, held once a month seasonally. Also related is the HEAL (Healthy Eating, Active Living) Hopewell Alliance, a volunteer community coalition focusing on improving the overall health outcomes of Hopewell residents.⁹ Ensuring residents have easy access to fresh, healthy food and opportunities for physical activity are important goals for many stakeholders in the city.

With these downtown revitalization and human health goals in mind, the Hopewell Downtown Partnership requested assistance through the Local Foods, Local Places program in 2017 to develop an action plan for promoting local food systems and healthy, walkable, economically vibrant communities. The goals of the Local Foods, Local Places program are to create:

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

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

In preparation for this technical assistance award, the Hopewell Downtown Partnership formed a Local Foods, Local Places steering committee comprised of a variety of community partners (Figure 3). The steering committee was supported by a technical assistance team from multiple federal and state agencies (Figure 4). The steering

Steering Committee

- **Evan Kaufman**, The Hopewell Downtown Partnership
- **Brian Manning**, Appomattox Regional Library System
- **Jasmine Gore**, City of Hopewell
- **Brandy Cramer**, The Cameron Foundation
- **Dawn Pittenger**, Crater District Health Departments – Virginia Department of Health
- **Meredith Dean**, The Produce Lounge

Figure 3 – Steering Committee Members

⁸ Hopewell Downtown Partnership. <https://hopewelldowntown.com/about/>. Accessed Oct. 16, 2018.

⁹ HEAL Cities & Towns Campaign. <http://www.healcitiesmidatlantic.org/hopewell-spotlight/> Accessed Oct. 16, 2018

committee and technical assistance team together planned for a public community workshop that would help Hopewell explore creation of a kitchen incubator, strengthen the downtown farmers market, expand opportunities to grow food within the city, and explore other ways to enliven downtown and improve the health and well-being of Hopewell residents.

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 Hopewell's goals.

ENGAGEMENT

The technical assistance process for Local Foods, Local Places has three phases (Figure 5). The planning phase consists of three preparation conference calls with the steering committee and technical assistance team to clarify goals and arrange workshop logistics. The convening phase includes the effort's capstone event—a two-day workshop in the community. The action 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 September 10-11, 2018, and the activities those days are described below. Workshop exercise results are included in **Appendix A**, workshop participants are listed in **Appendix B**, a workshop photo album is in **Appendix C**, a community data profile in **Appendix D**, funding resources in **Appendix E**, and general references in **Appendix F**.

Technical Assistance Team

- **John Foster and Melissa Kramer** – EPA Office of Community Revitalization
- **Felicia Fred, Reggie Harris, and Lorna Rosenberg** – EPA Region 3
- **Ron Batcher, Karl Hacker, and Américo Vega-Labiosa** – USDA Agricultural Marketing Service
- **Anne Herring** – USDA Rural Development
- **Diane Lenore-Giles and Donnie Thompson** – USDA Farm Service Agency
- **Shirelle Taliaferro** – U.S. Small Business Administration
- **Carrie Schmidt**, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
- **Rhonda Jackson and Kara Pilote**, U.S. Health Resources & Services Administration
- **Ramona Chapman**, Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development

Figure 4 – Technical Assistance Team

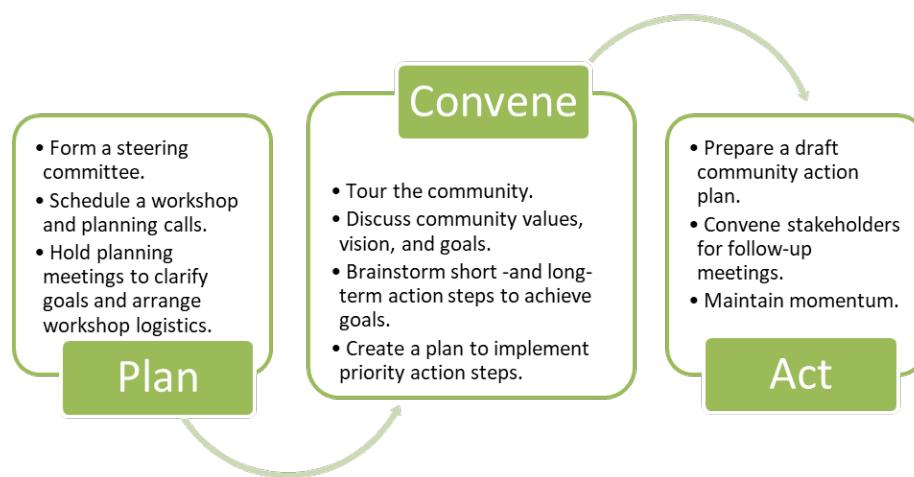


Figure 5 - Local Foods, Local Places Technical Assistance Process Diagram

COMMUNITY TOUR

The Local Foods, Local Places steering committee organized a tour of key sites in downtown Hopewell for the technical assistance team. The purpose of the Local Foods, Local Places tour is to provide federal and state partners a tangible sense of what is going on in the community related to the local food system and community revitalization efforts. Tour participants have an opportunity to engage directly with various stakeholders such as business owners they meet along the way. Finally, the tour can help the steering committee see their community with a fresh perspective and think about what the community's key assets are, what could use some improvement, and how connected or disconnected key locations are.

The tour began with a lunch at Saucy's Bar.B.Q., a popular Petersburg restaurant that opened a location in downtown Hopewell in early 2018 (Figure 6). The restaurant occupies the former Turner Welding building, and its renovation converted an abandoned industrial property into a lively dining spot with indoor and outdoor seating. After leaving Saucy's, participants toured the immediate surrounding area, which is a mix of abandoned and functioning light industrial uses, reflecting Hopewell's long history as a manufacturing city. An old Ford Dealership building is now home to Battle Boats, a maker of hand-fabricated boats for fire and police rescue. Another abandoned automobile showroom next door occupies a prime corner lot, which Evan Kaufman of the Hopewell Downtown Partnership noted would be an ideal space for a brewery, reflecting the industrial and commercial character of the neighborhood. The Downtown Partnership is working to transform this area of the city into a space for makers and artisans, recognizing that such businesses can survive in places with lower foot traffic because other revenue streams like wholesale distribution can supplement revenue from a retail storefront.

Fine arts are another component of the revitalization plan for downtown Hopewell. There is a new art gallery and working studio downtown, and the city recently renovated the historic Beacon Theatre. Built in 1928, the theater was abandoned in 1981 and had fallen into disrepair before being restored by the city in 2014. It is



Figure 6 – Saucy's Bar B. Q. is a new downtown restaurant in a building that used to be home to a welding business.



Figure 7 – The Hopewell Library offers programming for children and adults in the heart of downtown.

now a performance venue and conference facility, again serving as a focal point for culture and entertainment in the city.

Adjacent to the theater is the Hopewell library, headquarters of the Appomattox Regional Library System (Figure 7). The current building was completed in 2007 and offers meeting spaces, children's programming, exercise classes, and other community events.

Along East Broadway Avenue, Hopewell's main street, the tour participants saw streetscape improvements and renovated facades, significant public investments that have been successful in attracting new businesses. K&J Fitness is a personal training studio that opened after winning a business plan competition sponsored by the Downtown Partnership. It complements the adjacent gym, providing a convenient location for residents to improve their physical fitness, supporting the city's health goals.

Several food and drink establishments have helped to make downtown a destination. Guncotton Gallery and Coffee is a coffee shop, café, and art gallery that offers food from a Verde, a healthy food business that began by selling at farmers markets and special events (Figure 8). Burnette's Baked Goods is another downtown shop that began with Clyde Burnette selling homemade pies at the farmers market (Figure 9). The tour group also had a chance to talk to Larry Hancock, owner of Legacy Roasting Company, a nano coffee roaster that makes custom blends and offers tastings in its downtown building and Tonya Haley who plans to open Haley's Honey Meadery after success selling her local honey at the farmers market. More food businesses are also in the works, including a new fried chicken and donut shop, and a fast food seafood restaurant that will soon occupy empty downtown storefronts. Along with these new food businesses, the tour group also saw the former city social services building, the potential site for a new kitchen incubator.

In addition to the food scene, the tour group had a chance to see several new residential developments in downtown Hopewell. The City Point Place apartments were renovated in 2016 through a public-private partnership. The market-rate apartments right in the heart of downtown have a 100 percent occupancy rate. A new downtown low-income housing development funded through low-income tax credits is also under



Figure 8 – Guncotton Gallery and Coffee occupies the former Broadway Motor Co., a historic building on Hopewell's main street.



Figure 9 – Burnette's Baked Goods is one of several downtown businesses that got their start as a farmers market vendor.

construction. Freedman Point will have 68 apartments, more than doubling the number of housing units formerly on the downtown site.

The final stop on the tour was the community garden at the Heritage Garden Apartments. The garden was started in collaboration with the city, the state health department, and an existing garden group. Organizers are working with the housing authority to get involvement of nearby tenants.

VISION AND VALUES

During the workshop's first session on the evening of September 10th, Evan Kaufman, Executive Director of the Hopewell Downtown Partnership, welcomed attendees and spoke about the work the Partnership has done since Hopewell was designated a Virginia Main Street Community in 2011. He spoke of the public investments in Hopewell's infrastructure and historic architecture after a long deterioration that began in the 1970s. Those investments are providing a new image for downtown that attracts businesses and draws residents out.

After Evan's opening remarks, the meeting facilitators introduced participants to the Local Foods, Local Places program with a short presentation. The team highlighted the program's elements and the benefits of a local food system. They also shared examples of other communities pursuing goals like those in Hopewell.

The facilitation team then led attendees through a group exercise designed to explore core values of the community (Figure 10). Participants completed the statements, "I believe that Hopewell..." and "I believe that Hopewell's local food system...." The exercise allowed participants to reflect on and share their beliefs with the group, which highlighted many of the common perspectives and aspirations among Hopewell residents. Most participants expressed optimism about Hopewell's future given the

I believe that Hopewell...

- *Is making great strides in improving community relations.*
- *Is beginning to prosper with all the positive changes from the city and tribal leaders.*
- *Is moving in the right direction.*
- *Has a lot of potential.*
- *Will be a great place that people will travel to again.*
- *Will show local people they can grow their own produce and share their goods with the community.*
- *Can grow and develop to be a thriving town again.*
- *Has the "bones" to develop a wonderful program resulting in more jobs, healthier options, increased awareness, increased access, and increased love of community!*

I believe that Hopewell's local food system...

- *Can be a dynamic part of the local economy.*
- *Cannot grow until the current producers are well supported.*
- *Is not understood by the citizens of Hopewell.*
- *Has the potential to strengthen and grow.*
- *Is for everyone and should be designed with input from across all residents of the community.*
- *Can be the home of the 20-mile meal!*
- *Has the potential to be a model for other revitalizing communities across the country.*
- *Is important in improving community health.*
- *Needs our experience, talent and support.*
- *Has many different stakeholders in the community who want this to happen.*

Figure 10—During a workshop exercise, participants completed the statements "I believe that Hopewell..." and "I believe that Hopewell's local food system..." Some of thoughts shared during this exercise are shown above, reflecting the ideas that helped frame the workshop's action planning sessions on day two.

Future Hopewell Headlines

- Local Farmers and Food Pantries Partner to Feed the Community
- Hopewell Successfully Completes its Mission of Feeding Itself Through Local Gardens and Farms
- Wonder City Gala Celebrating 10 Years of Success: Garden of Eatin', Riverwalk, Transit System, and New Bike Path
- Hopewell, the Country's Healthiest City!
- Food Tour of Hopewell gets Five Stars for Delicious, Locally Sourced Food at Locations Along the Appomattox River Trail Bringing Thousands from Around the State
- Local Foods Improve Hopewell's Health

Figure 11 – Workshop participants imagined an aspirational headline in the local newspaper that they would like to read in 5-10 years showing the progress that has been made in town. Above are a sample of the responses.



Figure 12 – As workshop participants introduced themselves, they shared a favorite memory of enjoying a local food. This word cloud of responses shows key words from the responses, with the size of the word indicating the frequency it was mentioned.

downtown's revitalization, though several also lamented that too few people in the community were engaged in or even knew about all the positive things going on.

In another group exercise, the facilitation team asked workshop participants to write aspirational headlines for 5-10 years into the future, imagining what progress they would like to see in the development of Hopewell's local food system and revitalization of downtown (Figure 11). Participants highlighted how they envision local foods could help improve residents' health, downtown, and the local economy. The complete set of community responses to each of the workshop exercises is in **Appendix C**.

ASSET MAPPING

The morning of the second workshop day was focused on generating ideas for how Hopewell could achieve its goals. Attendees began by introducing themselves along with a favorite memory of a local food. A word cloud of responses shown in Figure 12 reveals some of the many fond memories that participants shared to set the tone for the day. After introductions, the workshop facilitators shared case studies from other Local Foods, Local Places projects in Walterboro, South Carolina, and Ajo, Arizona, along with best practices from across the country for farmers markets and commercial kitchens. The case studies helped show what is possible to stimulate creative thinking ahead of several brainstorming exercises.

Attendees then participated in an asset mapping exercise designed to highlight Hopewell's existing assets that could help advance the community's goals and identify potential gaps. Groups formed around tables to collectively "crowd source" participants'

knowledge of the local food system and notable assets. Working in groups around maps of downtown, the city overall, and the broader region, participants plotted and inventoried favorite places and assets (blue), any areas needing fixing or improvement (red), existing food system elements (orange), and opportunities for new

food system elements (green). The city map and its associated legend are included below (Figure 13). All maps are included in Appendix D:



Legend

Favorite Places and Assets

- 1. Beacon Theatre
- 2. Guncotton Coffee and Gallery/all of downtown
- 3. Appomattox River

Areas Needing Improvement

- 1. Health in all policies—City Hall
- 2. Community garden—technical assistance with garden, sustainability, community involvement
- 3. Incorporate HEAL Hopewell Alliance—revitalize
- 4. Bring hospital into local food system—healthy community workshops
- 5. Factory partnerships
- 6. Community Center—bus system

Existing Food System Elements

- 1. Randolph Market
- 2. Food Lion
- 3. Farmers market
- 4. S&N Market
- 5. Hopewell Food Pantry
- 6. Crafty's Drive Thru Grocery
- 7. Save-A-Lot

Potential Food System Elements

- 1. Heritage Garden
- 2. School food system
- 3. Grocery store needed in food desert area

Figure 13 – Workshop participants identified community assets and food system elements on a map of the city of Hopewell.

COMMERCIAL KITCHEN DESIGN

During the community tour, the steering committee and federal and state partners had an opportunity to walk through the abandoned former city social services building, the potential site for a commercial kitchen and café in Hopewell. During the workshop, Ron Batcher, an architect for USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, created one possible layout for the building (Figure 14).

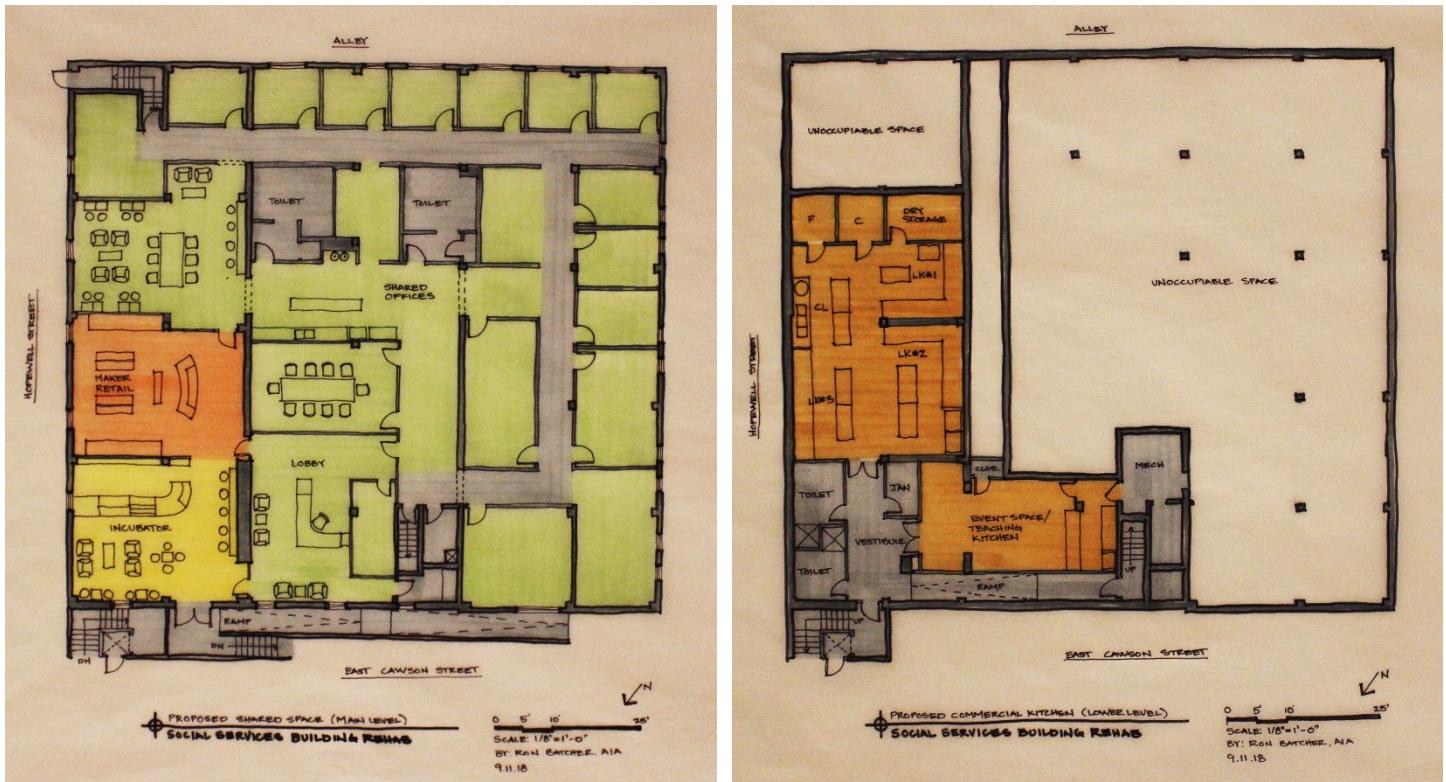


Figure 14 – Ron Batcher, an architect with the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service, created a potential layout for the former Hopewell social services building that would accommodate a kitchen incubator, retail space, and meeting rooms on the mail level (left) and an event space, teaching kitchen, and storage area on the lower level (right).

ACTION PLAN

The group exercises and discussions during the Hopewell workshop were designed to facilitate the development of a Local Foods, Local Places action plan, which guides the local community in implementation of the vision and goals they have established. The action plan is organized around four goals that were identified by the Local Foods, Local Places steering committee, refined during the workshop, and finalized in follow-up conference calls. During the workshop, participants brainstormed possible actions to help achieve each goal, prioritized those actions, and then provided details on how to complete the highest-priority actions under each goal. The action plan outline below lists each goal and supporting actions. Following the outline, more detailed action tables clarify the purpose of each action, measures of success, timeline for completion, roles, and possible sources of support and funding.

GOAL 1: Develop a financially sustainable kitchen incubator space and retail café downtown that supports local food entrepreneurs and downtown revitalization efforts.

Action 1.1: Create a kitchen incubator advisory board.

Action 1.2: Research (and possibly visit) other kitchen incubators.

Action 1.3: Identify potential incubator users and conduct a survey to assess their needs and gauge demand.

Action 1.4: Develop a business plan to recruit partners and identify funding sources.

Goal 2: Strengthen the downtown farmers market to support downtown activity and healthy living

Action 2.1: Survey the community about what they want in a farmers market and what would make them attend more often.

Action 2.2: Increase scheduled, regular activities at the farmers market.

Goal 3: Expand access to and knowledge of local food and healthy living activities for all Hopewell residents.

Action 3.1: Identify and reach out to partner organizations that are willing to help promote a healthier Hopewell.

Action 3.2: Organize healthy living event(s) that educate, engage, and encourage local residents to adopt a healthier lifestyle.

Action 3.3: Create a Healthy in Hopewell branding campaign, including images, a message, and a slogan.

Action 3.4: Identify land that residents could use for community gardening to help build a community-wide gardening network, especially in distressed neighborhoods.

Action 3.5: Explore creating (or using an existing) app to motivate Hopewell residents to adopt healthy behaviors.

Goal 4: Raise awareness of downtown food-oriented revitalization efforts to increase business activity and community participation in events and programs.

Action 4.1: Establish a mechanism to regularly communicate with participants (and invitees) in the Local Foods, Local Places workshop and help them connect with each other.

Action 4.2: Use the Local Foods, Local Places action plan to communicate with the entire Hopewell community about on-going food-based revitalization efforts to generate interest, support, and volunteers.

GOAL 1: Develop a financially sustainable kitchen incubator space and retail café downtown that supports local food entrepreneurs and downtown revitalization efforts.

Since becoming a Main Street-designated community in 2011, the Hopewell Downtown Partnership has been working to revitalize downtown Hopewell. Many of the successful downtown ventures it has supported have centered around food entrepreneurs. For example, Burnette's Baked Goods is a relatively new downtown bakery that grew out of a successful home-based business selling pies at the Hopewell farmers market. Other downtown tenants have sprung up, such as Guncotton Coffee and Gallery, a coffee shop and café, and the Legacy Roasting Company, a coffee roaster. Haley's Honey Meadery will open in late 2018, adding yet another food and drink option for residents and visitors who want to enjoy the historic downtown experience that Hopewell offers. Together, these successful ventures are part of a critical mass of food businesses, complimented by other downtown assets such as the Beacon Theater, that are making downtown a destination. Their success suggests there is sufficient demand to support even more. The Hopewell Downtown Partnership is exploring how to retrofit a vacant downtown city building into a kitchen incubator space and retail café that could support more new entrepreneurs needing a workspace and technical support to grow new food businesses. This goal focuses on moving the kitchen incubator project forward from the conceptual stage to a financially sustainable project by creating an advisory board, researching other kitchen incubators, assessing potential end-user needs, and creating a business plan. The actions share an over-arching purpose to help inform and educate the community about commercial kitchens—what they are, and how they can benefit the entire community—to garner buy-in and support.

Action 1.1: Create a kitchen incubator advisory board.

What this is and why it is important	<p>Creating a kitchen incubator is a major undertaking, requiring a significant capital investment. Executing the project in Hopewell will involve many decisions about how it will be financially structured and run. An advisory board could help the Hopewell Downtown Partnership gain different perspectives from across the community, ultimately creating a project that is more equitable and that better serves the different needs of Hopewell's diverse population. A board of committed stakeholders can also offer expertise and time to the project, which could help advance the project's timeline. Key constituencies to approach about joining the board, include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A finance expert • A development expert • A community advocate • A faith-based representative • Schools • Virginia State University faculty or other technical experts (e.g., in agriculture, food, culinary programs) • Person with experience in a commercial kitchen • Producer
Measures of success	The advisory board is formed and meets regularly

Action 1.1: Create a kitchen incubator advisory board.

Timeframe	By early 2019
Lead	Evan Kaufman, Hopewell Downtown Partnership
Supporting cast	Everyone who attended (or was invited to attend) the Local Foods, Local Places workshop
Costs and/or resources needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time • Space to hold meetings
Possible funding sources	Hopewell Downtown Partnership

Action 1.2: Research (and possibly visit) other kitchen incubators.

What this is and why it is important	Many communities across the country have successfully developed kitchen incubators. These projects offer an opportunity for Hopewell to learn best practices and other lessons to use in planning the new kitchen. Researching other incubators would help Hopewell better understand potential users, identify potential resources for construction and operation, and create a business model and business plan that would improve the likelihood of success.
Measures of success	Investigate (and possibly visit) at least five kitchen incubators, perhaps including those in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Washington, DC • Alexandria, VA • Roanoke, VA • Goochland, VA
Timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Five kitchens researched/visited by spring 2019 • Research should be ongoing until the kitchen is up and running because things can change that would affect the design and operations plan
Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evan Kaufman, Hopewell Downtown Partnership • Incubator Board (Action 1.1)
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stacey English, Hopewell Downtown Partnership • Potential incubator users • Possible builders/architects • Possible funders
Costs and/or resources needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time • Travel money
Possible funding sources	Hopewell Downtown Partnership

Action 1.3: Identify potential incubator users and conduct a survey to assess their needs and gauge demand.

What this is and why it is important	Before investing the significant capital involved in creating a new kitchen incubator, the Hopewell Downtown Partnership wants to ensure there is a critical mass of potential users that would make the venture financially viable. The needs of these users would determine the space layout and equipment provided in the kitchen. This information would also help shape the business plan by establishing what type of fee structure would best serve the user needs (e.g., membership fees or hourly rates).
Measures of success	Enough prospective users identified to make the incubator financially viable – probably 25-50, although the exact number depends on the fee structure
Timeframe	By spring of 2019 and on-going thereafter
Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evan Kaufman, Hopewell Downtown Partnership • Incubator Board (Action 1.1)
Supporting cast	University/college student interns from e.g., Virginia Commonwealth University, Virginia State University, and/or Richard Bland College
Costs and/or resources needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time • Money to promote the survey, e.g., newspaper ads (~\$1,000)
Possible funding sources	Hopewell Downtown Partnership

Action 1.4: Develop a business plan to recruit partners and identify funding sources.

What this is and why it is important	A business plan will be critical to attracting funding partners. A plan will help the advisory board reach consensus on a project that has broad support. It also can ensure the fee structure created will be financially sustainable. The plan should show all revenue streams, yearly costs, partners, and how the incubator operates day-to-day.
Measures of success	Business plan is completed.
Timeframe	Summer-fall of 2019
Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evan Kaufman, Hopewell Downtown Partnership • Incubator Board (Action 1.1)
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SCORE Business Learning Center (SBA resource partner) • Virginia Department of Health (for a potential contract to provide meals through the kitchen to the summer meals program) • Consultant
Costs and/or resources needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time • Money for a consultant (~\$2,500) or do-it-yourself with the help of a SCORE mentor
Possible funding sources	Virginia Main Street feasibility grant

Other Goal 1 Actions:

- Identify funding sources for a future kitchen.
- Inform the Hopewell High School Career Technical Education programs about the incubator space to encourage its use as a small business opportunity.
- Develop and teach a curriculum to involve the community in entrepreneurship and careers in the food industry.
- Identify what foods are lacking downtown during specific times and days so the kitchen café could fill gaps left by other local food businesses.
- Have the retail space accept SNAP benefits and indicate what products qualify to be purchased with SNAP.
- Grow demand for kitchen-produced products.
- Partner with school and college culinary programs.
- Develop partnerships that will assist with the development of a kitchen incubator space.
- Identify local retailers who could help build the kitchen.
- Create a marketing plan for the kitchen incubator.
- Advertise the kitchen incubator to grocery/convenience stores throughout the city.
- Develop a layout and costs for the kitchen incubator.
- Identify the location for the incubator.
- Create a dual-use space for events and use by community members.
- Start pre-leasing the kitchen incubator space to learn demand and need.

Goal 2: Strengthen the downtown farmers market to support downtown activity and healthy living

The Hopewell Downtown partnership began a farmers market in 2015. It has already spawned several new businesses, including a bakery, coffee roaster, and meadery. In 2018, the farmers market initiated biweekly operation—as a monthly “Third Thursday Open Air Marketplace” festival on downtown streets and as a monthly indoor market in the Guncotton Coffee and Gallery building. Both events, however, struggle to maintain consistent participation by growers and attract residents looking to purchase fresh produce. This goal is about strengthening the farmers market so it can better contribute to downtown Hopewell’s renaissance. The two highest-priority actions for this goal involve surveying the community to better understand what residents want and increasing scheduled, regular activities at the market that would attract more attendees.

Action 2.1: Survey the community about what they want in a farmers market and what would make them attend more often.

What this is and why it is important	The Hopewell Downtown Partnership would like to understand from residents who do not regularly attend the market why they are not coming and what might draw them to attend. The challenge is reaching people beyond those who could be surveyed at the market itself. One possible way to do this is to use the Downtown Partnership's e-newsletter distribution list, which reaches beyond the normal farmers market attendees. Other avenues to reach people will be needed as well, particularly to reach traditionally under-represented demographics. For example, the Hopewell Redevelopment and Housing Authority could share flyers in the city's public housing. Survey findings would help the Partnership strategize how to increase attendance, which could lead to increased vendor profits and attract more vendor participation. To encourage people to complete the survey, the Partnership might offer incentives like entrance into a raffle and/or a \$1 coupon towards farmers market purchases. On site, interviews or a dot survey at the market could easily capture the views of the people who do attend.
Measures of success	Number of surveys returned – aim for 160
Timeframe	By end of December 2018
Lead	Stacey English, Hopewell Downtown Partnership
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vendors (could include surveys with their marketing materials) • Downtown businesses (could distribute surveys) • Utilities (could send survey out with a bill) • Hopewell Redevelopment and Housing Authority
Costs and/or resources needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time • Minimal amount of money
Possible funding sources	Hopewell Downtown Partnership

Action 2.2: Increase scheduled, regular activities at the farmers market.

What this is and why it is important	The Third Thursday Open Air Marketplace already has some activities that help attract additional attendees. More activities, especially those that are regularly scheduled, could help increase attendance even more. Reaching out to the community to identify activities that appeal to various demographics could draw a larger and more diverse crowd. Knowing that different activities and programs will occur regularly could generate loyalty and more repeat visitors. Cooking demonstrations, the Power of Produce kids programming, and offering a blender bike to make smoothies are a few examples that could serve these ends while also helping fulfill other community goals like encouraging healthy living. Planning other events to coincide with Marketplace days would also help each attract a bigger crowd than any event might on its own.
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of attendees Consistency of events held Each new activity is championed by a different person or group
Timeframe	By May 2019, in time for next market season
Lead	Stacey English, Hopewell Downtown Partnership
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Master gardeners Restaurants (for sponsoring cooking demonstrations) Appomattox Regional Library System Virginia Department of Health Cameron Foundation Virginia Cooperative Extension Family Nutrition Program
Costs and/or resources needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time Funding for events
Possible funding sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foundation grants Sponsorships from restaurants, banks, etc. Virginia Tech Cooperative Extension marketing resources for farmers markets and certification training program for farmers

Other Goal 2 Actions:

- Provide (at a small fee) hourly van trips to the farmers market from Summit, Kippax, Mansion Hills, Cobblestone, Westmoreland.
- Provide a bus route to the farmers market.
- Create opportunities for physical activity.
- Provide free opportunities for families at the market, e.g., dancing, free movie night, concerts.

- Provide Virginia Tech/Virginia State University marketing assistance to the farmers market and farmers.
- Conduct an educational campaign to attract more customers to the farmers market including news and social media, advertising healthy events, products, or demos.
- Partner with hospitals to expand health resources within the community.
- Create additional local gardens for hospitals and various facilities to incorporate local produce into menus and to provide to employees.
- Encourage City Council and the Planning Commission to incorporate bike paths into city infrastructure to encourage young adults to move here and be active.
- Develop a metric process to better understand visitors' needs and interests.
- Assess current knowledge of the farmers market and off-site farm market.
- Advertise that the farmers market accepts SNAP.
- Raise funds for a SNAP-doubling program and target SNAP recipients for outreach.
- Locate farms that currently have CSA customers and invite them to have a pick-up location at the farmers market.
- Develop incentives for small businesses, local vendors, and crafters to participate in the market.

Goal 3: Expand access to and knowledge of local food and healthy living activities for all Hopewell residents.

Many Hopewell residents face health challenges that they could improve through a better diet and more exercise. This goal is about helping Hopewell residents learn about healthier lifestyle options and become motivated to pursue them. The goal also focuses on ensuring that residents have adequate opportunities to do so, recognizing that is necessary for a more equitable Hopewell.

Action 3.1: Identify and reach out to partner organizations that are willing to help promote a healthier Hopewell.

What this is and why it is important	Partner organizations are needed to help with a range of activities that would support a healthier Hopewell, including Action 3.2. Essentially, this action identifies people and/or organizations that would support and contribute to various health-related projects. Partners might include those identified through actions 4.1 and 4.2, such as:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• School district• Farmers• Cooperative Extension• 4H• Virginia Agriculture and Natural Resources• Hopewell Department of Social Services• Hopewell/Prince George Healthy Families• Hopewell Office on Youth

Action 3.1: Identify and reach out to partner organizations that are willing to help promote a healthier Hopewell.

Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of prospective partners contacted • Number of actual partners identified • Number of people and organizations engaged in health-related activities in Hopewell
Timeframe	Initial outreach by November 2018 and ongoing
Lead	Tiffany Carter, HEAL Hopewell Alliance
Supporting cast	• Liza Dobson, VA Tech Cooperative Extension
Costs and/or resources needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time • Refreshments for meetings
Possible funding sources	Office of Youth budget

Action 3.2: Organize healthy living event(s) that educate, engage, and encourage local residents to adopt a healthier lifestyle.

What this is and why it is important	Events like health fairs can build community, engage diverse organizations and audiences, and encourage healthy lifestyles by providing education and opportunities to participate. Many different organizations in Hopewell offer services and activities that could support healthy lifestyles, but many Hopewell residents are not aware of them. An event such as a fair offers an opportunity to connect providers with community members. Events could be used to solicit input on future activities that would attract a diverse demographic to engage in healthy activities. For example, organizers could gauge the level of interest in having a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) pick-up location or mobile farmers market stop and share that information with farmers so they know where there is demand. Hosting events downtown could benefit local shops and restaurants, although also hosting events in neighborhoods (e.g., a mobile healthy food cart) will help reach people where they are. Events could target neighborhoods where interventions might have the greatest impact on improving health outcomes. Incentives could be used to increase attendance.
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of events • Number and diversity of attendees • Number of participating organizations • Number of new ideas or needs identified • People feel heard • Sales in downtown businesses
Timeframe	• First event by June 2019

Action 3.2: Organize healthy living event(s) that educate, engage, and encourage local residents to adopt a healthier lifestyle.

Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HEAL Hopewell Alliance (Tiffany Carter)
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liza Dobson, VA Tech Cooperative Extension • Hopewell Downtown Partnership • Hopewell Recreation and Parks • Hopewell city staff and administration • Garden of Eatin' • Schools • Youth council • Hospital • Health department • Doctors, nurses, e.g., Dr. Morris • Cameron Foundation • Cooperative Extension • Insurance providers • Faith leaders • Library • Farmers
Costs and/or resources needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time • Money to stage events
Possible funding sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Hopewell • Foundations • Local business sponsorships

Action 3.3: Create a Healthy in Hopewell branding campaign, including images, a message, and a slogan.

What this is and why it is important	A branding campaign would create a polished uniform image and logo that is easily identifiable and connotes positive feelings. The branding could then be used in all outreach and marketing when communicating with people about the health-oriented activities and programs in Hopewell. A collaborative process to get community input on the branding materials would help ensure they are effective.
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Branding materials developed • Number of organizations using brand
Timeframe	Materials developed by January 2019
Lead	Jasmine Gore, City of Hopewell
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharon Neal, Hopewell community garden • Community residents

Action 3.3: Create a Healthy in Hopewell branding campaign, including images, a message, and a slogan.

Costs and/or resources needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time • Money for branding materials, and possibly for a consultant
Possible funding sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grants • City funding

Action 3.4: Identify land that residents could use for community gardening to help build a community-wide gardening network, especially in distressed neighborhoods.

What this is and why it is important	The Heritage Gardens community garden has shown that residents would like the opportunity to grow their own food. Expanding the number of gardens across the city could build on this success and improve access to healthy food, especially in distressed neighborhoods where many residents cannot easily get to a store that sells fresh food. Opportunities within neighborhoods to expand gardens could include vacant lots, school property, and parks. Before establishing a new garden, organizers should conduct testing and/or adopt gardening practices that can ensure food grown on the land would be free from contamination and safe to eat. For example, organizers are currently considering raised beds to ensure food grown will be free from contamination.
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of places identified for potential community gardens • Amount of acreage identified for potential community gardens • Number of residents who would be within walking distance of a potential community garden
Timeframe	By next growing season – May 2019
Lead	Sharon Neal, Hopewell community garden
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tezya Griffin, Hopewell Director of Development • Diane Cook, City of Hopewell • Felicia Fred, EPA Region 3
Costs and/or resources needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time to identify land and coordinate any new gardens • Money for tools and supplies to implement a new garden
Possible funding sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private foundations might be a funding source for gardens if a nonprofit organization is in charge of the land. • The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality might be able to help with assessing properties for contamination and providing recommendations for how to safely do a community garden.

Action 3.5: Explore creating (or using an existing) app to motivate Hopewell residents to adopt healthy behaviors

What this is and why it is important	Many of the actions in this action plan involving getting Hopewell residents to adopt healthier behaviors. However, after residents are educated about healthy behaviors and have more opportunities to adopt them, what is missing is something that would motivate residents to change. For example, an app could help structure games and friendly competitions among Hopewell residents in which they earn points for healthy behaviors that can be redeemed for prizes. Regular meetings around town could help residents support and encourage each other to participate. Other incentive programs have used such approaches to encourage adoption of new behaviors and practices, e.g., the OSHA Voluntary Protection Programs.
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of residents using the app Number of residents adopting healthier behaviors
Timeframe	June 2019
Lead	Evan Kaufman, Hopewell Downtown Partnership (until other lead identified)
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insurance companies – many have their own apps for members
Costs and/or resources needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time Money to develop and maintain the app Money for prizes and other incentives
Possible funding sources	Hopewell Manufacturers Association and/or individual factories

Other Goal 3 Actions:

- Hold a “dinner in the garden” event to demonstrate what can be done with what you grow (include free food, help with transportation, environmentally friendly).
- Organize one or more free community meal(s) and forum(s) to increase awareness of and gather input on efforts.
- Hold urban farming educational sessions and provide the tools necessary.
- Conduct and educational campaign to increase knowledge of local foods and where to get them in Hopewell and the benefits of eating local. Have window clings in local places that use local foods or sell them; menu item stickers for places that use local sourced foods in items.
- Conduct listening sessions in neighborhoods to gather resident needs and input on how to expand access to and knowledge of local food and healthy living activities.
- Identify obstacles that hinder access to and knowledge of local food and healthy activities.
- Create culturally appropriate/creative marketing materials catered to minority groups, e.g., healthy soul food cooking, etc.

- Investigate finding garden space for local growing opportunities.
- Expand Heritage Gardens (now a demonstration project) “Garden of Eatin’.” Offer demonstrations and teach garden techniques; business classes.
- Create programs with industry to provide health resources and food to communities (neighborhoods) they surround.
- Create host partnerships with regional food/vendor/farmer ecosystems to provide best practices, support, and partnerships.
- Offer Virginia Fresh Match program to the community at the farmers markets.
- Create a mobile farmers market to expand access to those without transportation, the elderly, and disabled.
- Identify an independent grocery store operator willing to open a store in an area of Hopewell that is a food desert.
- Create pop-up markets for areas with limited access to healthy food.
- Work to connect local farmers and growers to the food pantry to increase donations of local and healthy foods. Pair with an educational program for the pantry such as “Walk the line.”
- Create a map of local sources of healthy food. Ensure digital and print access.
- Advocate for City Council to adopt a Health in All Policies plan and provide resources to a city-wide plan to improve health rankings.
- Advocate that the city participate with state groups that support soil/ag and farmers.
- Create paid internships with local farmers for high school students.
- Create gardens for local schools to incorporate grown produce in school menus.
- Create a program for low-income residents on how to prepare healthy foods and exercise.
- Hold free workshops in low-income communities about healthy living, foods, and the farmers market.
- Gather input and guidance from local residents and stakeholders on what is needed from any grocery store effort that would be developed in Hopewell.
- Create and distribute recipes with products found at farmers markets.
- Produce a seasonal and regional cookbook featuring local farmers and growers and health facts.
- Coordinate with local Parks & Rec and day care/retirement to transport to or offer on-site tastings, demos, and education.
- Educate the community on the benefits of using local transit to increase use/travel to downtown.

Goal 4: Raise awareness of downtown food-oriented revitalization efforts to increase business activity and community participation in events and programs.

At the workshop’s opening session, a recurrent theme was the need for greater awareness among Hopewell residents about the efforts underway to revitalize the city. Most people believed that greater awareness would lead to greater participation in programs, activities, and events, helping to ensure that all demographic groups in Hopewell can contribute to and benefit from the positive changes that are happening. Increasing the number of Hopewell residents that regularly go downtown to shop, eat, or engage in an activity will also help

enliven the streets and increase business revenue, helping to attract additional entrepreneurs. The Local Foods, Local Places action plan is a tool that can inform and engage residents in these efforts.

Action 4.1: Establish a mechanism to regularly communicate with participants (and invitees) in the Local Foods, Local Places workshop and help them connect with each other.	
What this is and why it is important	Many participants at the Local Foods, Local Places workshop expressed interest in knowing more about what is going on, spreading the word across the city, and connecting with other like-minded residents. Harnessing their energy and enthusiasm will allow Hopewell to do more activities and have broader support for ongoing efforts. A mechanism to continue to communicate could be as simple as creating an email distribution list, or it could be something more formal like convening regular meetings. Other possibilities are using the Hopewell Downtown Partnership's website or creating a Facebook workplace group. The important point is to make sure that people remain engaged and informed and know where to turn to offer or ask for help on food-based revitalization initiatives.
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of people who agree to receive regular communication about initiatives related to the Local Foods, Local Places workshop Number of new faces who contribute to on-going or start new efforts.
Timeframe	By March 2019
Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evan Kaufman, Hopewell Downtown Partnership Stacey English, Hopewell Downtown Partnership
Supporting cast	Greg Hofbauer HDP
Costs and/or resources needed	Time to set up a communication mechanism and regularly communicate
Possible funding sources	N/A

Action 4.2: Use the Local Foods, Local Places action plan to communicate with the entire Hopewell community about on-going food-based revitalization efforts to generate interest, support, and volunteers.

What this is and why it is important	The participants in the Local Foods, Local Places workshop have demonstrated interest in food-based revitalization efforts through their attendance. However, many other residents and stakeholders are likely interested and could be engaged if they were better informed about what is going on. This action is about using the resulting workshop action plan to inform people about what is going on, and in the process generate interest, support, and volunteers to help complete the actions and develop additional ones. The action plan could be shared at a launch party, in the press, and through social media, among other ways. Outreach could include the list of partners identified in Action 3.2.
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of people who read the plan • The number of new volunteers contributing to various actions
Timeframe	ASAP and on-going
Lead	Hopewell Downtown Partnership
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Denny Morris, Crater Planning District Commission • Hopewell Recreation and Parks • Hopewell government • Chamber of Commerce • Local civic organizations • Local health organizations • Hopewell Prince George Community Health Center • Hopewell Healthy Families • Petersburg Area Regional Tourism – will help spread word about events • Newspapers
Costs and/or resources needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time • Money for marketing and distribution
Possible funding sources	Hopewell Downtown Partnership

Other Goal 4 Actions:

- Create an ad campaign marketing all of the downtown restaurants. Can include farmers market and downtown events.
- Involve more regional/local media for support of LFLP effort.
- Post an events calendar in the newspaper, on social media, and in public community space.

- Get a billboard approved to promote the farmers market twice a month – a digital board to change dates.
- Advertise with local newspapers, television stations – PBS, Virginia Homegrown, Peggy Singleton.
- Add or link local food campaign and promote content to city tourism information sites/booklets. Trying local is attractive!
- Create a healthy mile with HEAL and HDP that features stops at downtown vendors that have healthy local food.
- Create a cooking challenges competition for local chefs.
- Create local jobs through training and employment at various gardens.
- Hold downtown business open houses and offer discounts during the time frame (small percent off), and have samples of local foods, even at non-food places – cookies from bakeshop at boutique store.
- Feature restaurants and local business reviews in local papers – not Yelp or Facebook. Not propaganda, but real and helpful reviews.
- Reach out to local industry to raise awareness and garner support for the Local Foods, Local Places effort.
- Create a brochure for the Hopewell-Prince George Chamber of Commerce.
- Partner with local businesses to incentivize participation – coupons, point system.
- Add healthy options to city website health page.
- Partner with food trucks that sell fresh foods.
- Organize a downtown local food fair/celebration with tours of businesses.
- Create a city-wide food festival, tasting, or event that features local, healthy food.
- Create then participate in regional local food council connecting multiple metro areas.
- Find out what the community already knows about the efforts and how they receive the information.
- Hold community meetings regularly to include everyone in the decision-making process.
- Encourage city staff to participate in events already happening.
- Partner with schools and other CBO's to raise awareness by hosting pop-up events throughout the community.
- Create partnerships with state tourism.
- Encourage city staff to participate in events already happening.

IMPLEMENTATION AND NEXT STEPS

In the first weeks after the workshop, work was already underway in Hopewell to begin implementation of the action plan.

- The Hopewell Downtown Partnership and the Virginia Department of Health and HEAL Committee met to discuss opportunities for working together on common goals.
- The city of Hopewell applied for technical assistance through the National League of Cities – Cities of Opportunity program.

- The city's Youth Services Commission discussed ways to help with projects coming out of the action plan and set aside some money in the budget to support that work.
- Evan Kaufman, Executive Director of the Hopewell Downtown Partnership, made the first scheduled site visit to another kitchen incubator in Roanoke, Virginia, on October 29, visiting LEAP Kitchen. The goal of the series of site visits is to listen and learn about best practices and lesson learned from other kitchen incubators in the region.

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