

Small Town Economic Diversification Strategies

Tales from the Road

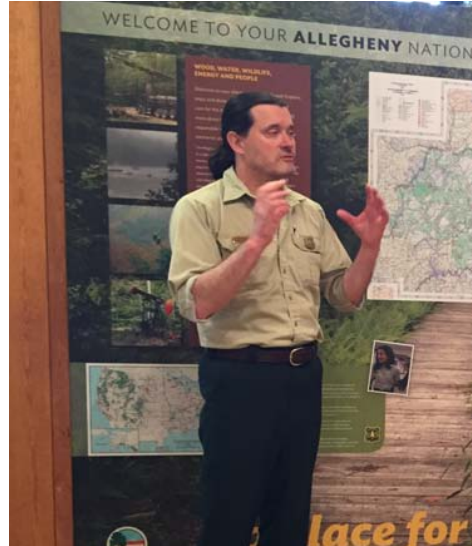
“Above all, we must free ourselves from our tendency to see cities as their buildings, and remember that the real city is made of flesh, not concrete.”

- Edward Glaeser

“The most important thing is for cities to understand what they’re good at, and to understand the assets they have. This is, in some ways, Economic Development 101.”

- Jeremy Nowak

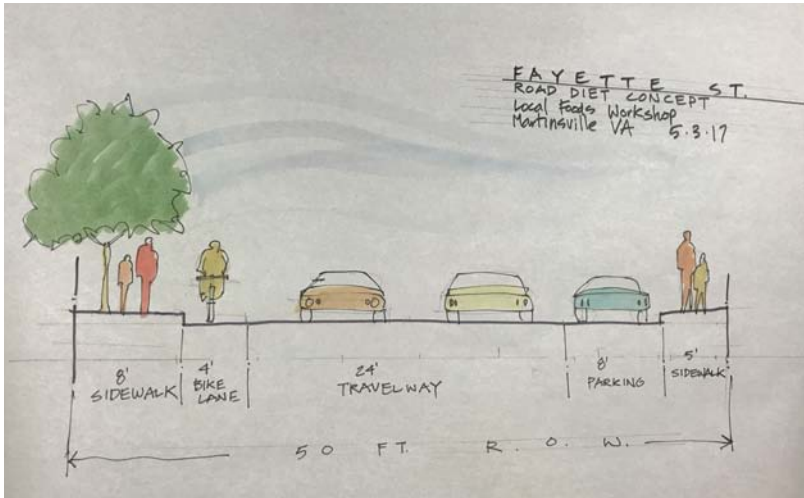
People Assets



Place Assets



Planning Helps Unlock Their Potential



People + Place + Planning

Economic Success Stories

- **Forest County, PA** - Outdoor recreation and entrepreneurship
- **Pikeville, TN** – Placemaking
- **Amherst, VA** – Refresh zoning for the 21st century
- **Williamson, WV** – Creating a Culture of Health
- **Rainelle, WV** – Recovery (natural and public health crisis)
- **Martinsville, VA** – Social capital and entrepreneurship

TIONESTA, PA

People



Bruce Parkhurst and Rowan Rose

Place



TIONESTA, PA – NURTURING ENTREPRENURSHIP



Market Village

- Population 483
- Fire in 2003 destroyed 2 city blocks and ½ of retailers
- The local IDA/IDC developed pop up storefronts idea
- Goal was to support micro enterprise to build businesses for brick & mortar space
- Sheds rent for \$50 to \$70 per month, tenants pay electric
- Open May to October, Friday to Sunday
- Increased traffic downtown – 1,000 visitors on a busy day
- Programming includes concerts

Before and After



Marienville, PA

People



Kevin Carter and Rob Fallon

Place



MARIENVILLE, PA – OUTDOOR RECREATION



4 Seasons Trail and Recreation Hub

- Population 3,137
- Located at gateway to Allegheny National Forest
- Major assets are several trails that come close, but do not connect:
 - 100 miles of ATV
 - 300 miles of snowmobile
 - North Country
 - Proposed rail trail
 - Equestrian

Pikeville, TN

People



Philip Cagle, Mayor of Pikeville

Place





PIKEVILLE, TN – PLACEMAKING



Bypassed but not Passed By

- Population 1,608
- In response to Bypass, the town redesigned Main Street to attract tourism.
- Project encompassed $\frac{1}{4}$ mile of Main Street, completed in 2009.
- ARC (\$99,500) and USDA-RD (\$50,000) supported redesign effort of Main Street, as well as a \$596,000 grant from TNDOT for construction.
- Streetscape includes 48 ornamental street lights, textured brick crosswalks, and 1,600 linear feet of sidewalk.



Pavilion

- \$20,000 from ARC
- \$20,000 from USDA-RD Rural Business Enterprise Grant Program
- \$59,200 from Tennessee Department of Agriculture

Amherst, VA

People



Jack Hobbs, former Town Manager (left)

Place



County Zoning = Massive setbacks, onerous parking requirements, no mixed use provisions



Amherst, VA – Population 2,231



Williamson, WV

People



Place



Maria Arnot, former AmeriCorps VISTA and Dr. Dino Beckett, director of the Williamson Health and Wellness Center

WILLIAMSON, WV – INVESTING IN HEALTH



Williamson Health and Wellness Center

- Population 3,191
- Creating a “Culture of Health” in coal country
- The Williamson Health and Wellness Center, Inc. (WHWC) is a Federally Qualified Health Center that opened in downtown Williamson in 2014
- Dedicated to building a culture of health through holistic community and clinical interventions in order to stimulate a thriving local economy centered on wellness for the entire population

WILLIAMSON, WV – INVESTING IN HEALTH



Williamson Health and Wellness Center

- Also operates the Mingo County Diabetes Coalition provides diabetes education, a community garden, a downtown farmers market and mobile farmers market, as well as active living programs and activities.
- Health Innovation Hub offers entrepreneur assistance and co-work space
- “A lot of people don’t associate health with entrepreneurship,” Beckett said. “But if we help people get healthy, the workforce is going to get healthy and they are going to want to work and participate in activities that help their families.” - Beckett

Rainelle, WV

People



Tammy Jordan, Fruits of Labor

Place



RAINELLE, WV – SEEDS OF RECOVERY



Fruits of Labor Training Café and Bakery

- Population 1,505
- Downtown café and bakery
- Seeds of Recovery program is a culinary and agriculture training program for women who are recovering addicts
- Vision is to provide economic development by changing the poverty level, addiction rates, and homelessness
- Affiliated with the Greenbriar County drug court; program is an alternative to jail time; 75% graduation rate
- “Seeds of Recovery has touched their lives in a way that nobody else has—and it’s taught me that if you can surround someone with positive people, you can help them recover through hard times.”

Martinsville, VA

People



**Billie Coles and James Hagwood, Martinsville-Henry Co
CDC & Susan McCulloch, City of Martinsville**

Place



MARTINSVILLE, VA – SOCIAL CAPITAL



A new life for the Paradise Inn

- Population 13,821
- Cultural and social hub of the city's African American culture
- Tina Turner, Ray Charles, and James Brown among those who played here
- Today community struggles from high unemployment and poor health
- City, community, and CDC coming together around the vision of a "Healthy Hub," which would incubate food businesses, have a restaurant serving healthy foods, community garden, and in long term a food hub



MARTINSVILLE, VA – SOCIAL CAPITAL



Healthy Hub vision

- \$65,000 state grant to develop a complete streets plan for Fayette Street
- \$75,000 state grant (through ARC program) to study the feasibility of the Healthy Hub
- \$50,000 in Virginia Brownfields Assistance Funds for a Phase II Environmental Site Assessment
 - “Our team was very intrigued about the revitalization opportunities for this property centered on building a food-centered ‘Healthy Hub’ on this property”
- \$190K state/fed assistance

Takeaways

1. Leadership is the x-factor

- Invest in the capacity of the people and leadership of rural communities
- People have great ideas, deep knowledge of local assets, and can easily get involved
- But people are stretched, resources are non-existent or limited

2. A strong vision and plan are a magnet for support

- People want to invest in projects they believe in/are excited about

3. Partnerships help make it happen

- Who are the people assets? Who controls the place assets? Where are disconnects? Who might want to fund/support your vision?

4. Start small and incremental change may inspire bigger shifts

- Downtown Corbin, KY (new restaurants, café, new housing, and a tech company downtown)

