Livable Regions and Communities in Appalachia

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What Makes a *Livable* Community?

- Shops, civic buildings, entertainment, services located in central location
- Has a strong, diverse economic engine that can better weather changes
- Is attractive and supports healthy community
- Lasts through good times and challenging ones
- Evolves but keeps its character--provides place for change within context
Dodge City, KS
in 1874
Asheville, NC
Cartersville
Elements of a Livable Community Plan

- Environmental
- Economic
- Social (Health)
“Must Haves”

How Do You Get There?

• Shared Vision—community has to agree
• Plan—develop with participation from everyone
• Champion—long term commitment to lead, passion
• Patience and Collaboration—takes time, decades; can evolve; BALANCE of Many needs
Develop a Shared Vision and Plan
Identify Champion
How Long Does it Take?

• 1997—Union Station, new multi-modal transit station; additional elements another 8-10 years

• Mayor was champion, storyteller extraordinaire, learned funding, networked

• Meridian, MS—Mayor John Robert Smith

• 1990s—recognized need to revitalize; sought funding from FRA; completed plan 1993
Environmental Considerations

• Protecting natural areas, green space, parks
• Increasing energy efficiency in homes and businesses
• Providing more access to outdoor activities—trails, fishing, birding
• Neighborhoods that encourage “community” feel and health
• Recycling centers
• Sewer system
Environmental Priorities in Rural Communities

- Rain gardens
- Green infrastructure—stormwater improvements
- Greenways and trails
- Parks
- WWTP—energy efficient facilities and management
Energy Management at Water and Wastewater Utilities

• Focus on energy management in WWTP and DWP

• Phased approach
  – Visit the site and evaluate potential ways to save energy
  – Provide training and develop plan
  – Implement plan and monitor results
  – Report to officials and community
Social Considerations

- Places that support the needs of a variety of people
- Homes and services for older generation
- Activities that attract young people
- Community services and security that draws young families
- Home types that fit many needs
- Activities that create sense of community
Economic

• Build in many dimensions, use local/regional assets
• Low impact to infrastructure
• Attract non-profits, artists or small businesses
• Establish community-run businesses that invest in local priorities

• Energy efficient civic buildings, clustering
• Provide opportunity to make a decent living
Some Priorities Identified by Alabama Communities
Phil Campbell and Holt

**Phil Campbell**
- Land use/zoning
- Jobs
- Return of food store
- Sewer system
- Memorial park
- Pocket parks and playgrounds
- New gateway to community
- Walking and bike trails
- Youth recreation center
- Community health service
- Farmers market/co-op
- Economic revitalization plan

**Holt**
- Outdoor track/basketball
- School technology
- Small business cooperative
- Housing market analysis
- Capacity building for housing and human services
- Community redesign
- Creative center to foster entrepreneurs
- Industrial park
Hackleburg

• Establish Hackleburg CDC
• Economic and housing market analysis—status and needs
• Main street corridor study
• Sewer
• History center
• Downtown park, Farmer’s Market, Amphitheater
• Rails to trails, multi-use regional trail
• Housing resource center
Greensburg, KS

- New industry—wind turbines
- Trademark for area
- Green buildings—energy efficient and LEED certified
- Tourism—green solution is drawing visitors from around the world
Miner County, SD
Asheville, NC

• Five counties, planning organization

• Several priorities:
  – Maintain character of the area
  – Enhance green manufacturing/business
  – Improve locally produced energy, better access
  – Protect natural resources that draw tourists, provide jobs, enhance quality of life

        -- Provide more options for housing and transportation
        -- Protect agricultural lands
How Can Rural and Small Towns Build Economic Sustainability?

- Farming—vegetables, cattle, dairy, nuts, fruit
- Value-added products
- Green/light industry
- Tourism
- Warehousing
- Phone banks
Trails, Green Infrastructure, Green Manufacturing, Energy Efficient Buildings, Affordable Homes

Social

Environmental

Economic

Trails, Green Infrastructure, Green Manufacturing, Energy Efficient Buildings, Affordable Homes

Sustainable Community
One Last Thought

Change is the price for rural survival.

(Rural Development in the United States, William Galston, Karen Baehler; 1994)