

Cool & Connected

Rural Trends and Regionalism in Bridging the Digital Divide



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Broadband and Community Development

- ◎ America is re-centering. This is good.
- ◎ Broadband can reinforce this. It is both infrastructure and amenity.
- ◎ We are piloting new planning assistance: Cool & Connected.

SMALL TOWN DEVELOPMENT OPTION 1



SMALL TOWN DEVELOPMENT OPTION 2



DEVELOPMENT CHOICES: FACTORS TO CONSIDER

- ③ Economic opportunities
- ③ Protection of natural resources
- ③ What kind of place will attract and retain young people?

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- ③ Planning assistance to help communities come up with strategies to leverage broadband to revitalize downtowns & neighborhoods.
- ③ We want to help communities focus development in existing neighborhoods and make them walkable, connected and economically vibrant.
- ③ Focusing development on traditional main streets and existing neighborhoods is good for the natural environment, good for people, and good for local economies.

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- ① Use internet service to create places that people want to be.
- ① Don't wait for perfection. Use what you got. (Or what you will get.)
- ① Revitalize downtowns, main streets, and existing neighborhoods -- especially in rural areas.

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EXAMPLES OF BROADBAND + PLACE

- ③ Use broadband service to retain, expand, and attract businesses on main streets and in existing rural communities.
- ③ Combine internet service with other local amenities to attract new investors, visitors, and residents.
- ③ Develop or market downtown Wifi zones.
- ③ Extend broadband service beyond anchor institutions in ways that promote main street development.
- ③ Select centrally located anchor institutions or community facilities that will receive broadband service.

DANVILLE, VIRGINIA

- Population: 42,907
- Once a thriving manufacturing town for textiles and tobacco
- Years of disinvestment and economic crisis starting in 1990s
- Implemented strategy pairing downtown revitalization, broadband infrastructure, and workforce training to overcome these issues



DANVILLE, VIRGINIA

- ⦿ How to attract young people & bring workers downtown?
- ⦿ Re-designated a large portion of downtown as the River District
 - ⦿ Main Street retail, Tobacco Warehouse District, the Dan River
- ⦿ Public space enhancements and catalytic public and private projects paired with broadband infrastructure
 - ⦿ Redeveloped warehouses into live-work spaces with office space, condos, and loft apartments
 - ⦿ New park, pavilion, and riverfront trail
 - ⦿ Pedestrian plaza at intersection of three areas
 - ⦿ Streetscape improvements
 - ⦿ Built network out to provide access for all buildings
 - ⦿ Free public wifi zone

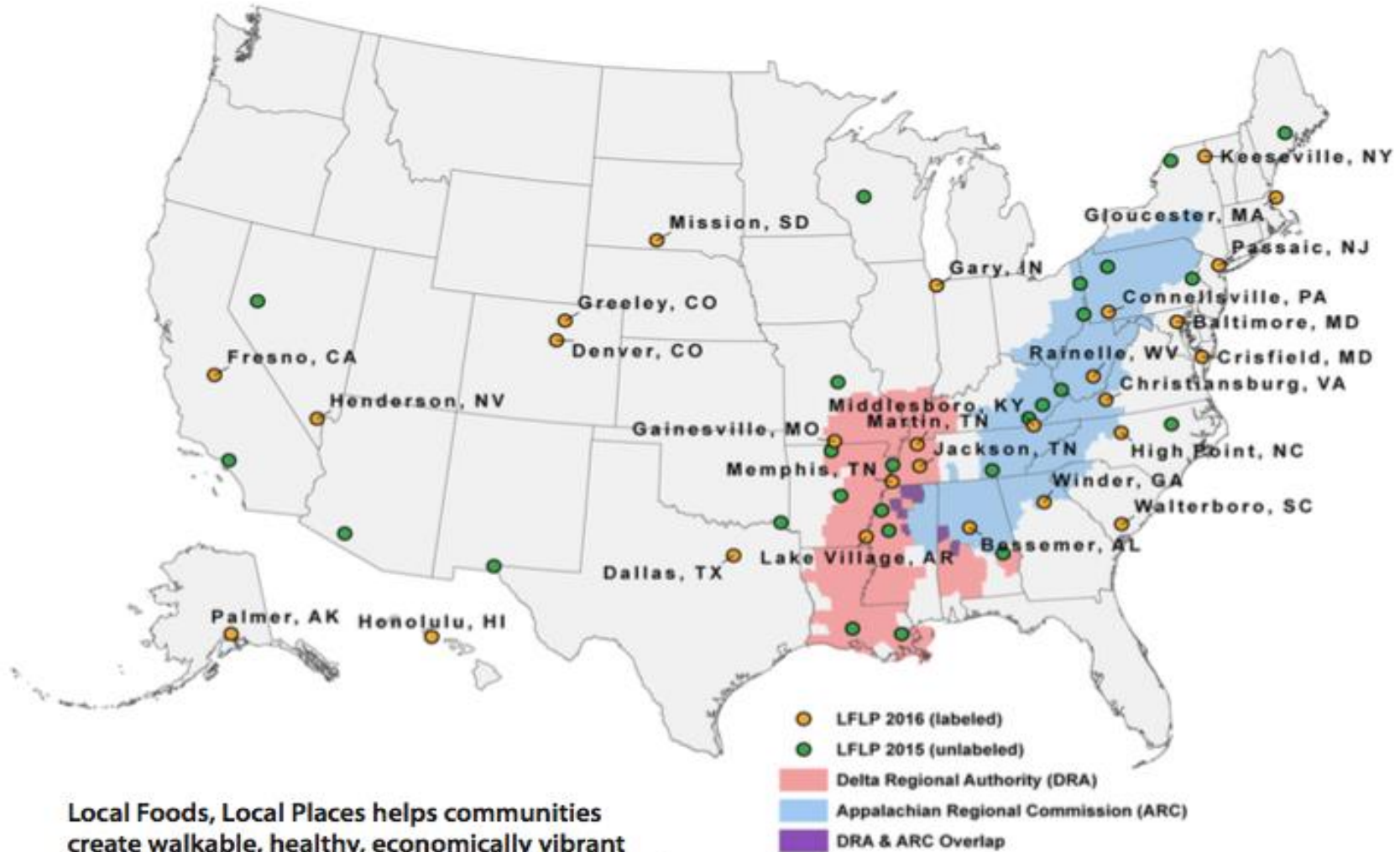




MODEL PROGRAM

Local Foods, Local Places

2016



Local Foods, Local Places helps communities create walkable, healthy, economically vibrant neighborhoods through the development of local food systems.

Sources: Local Foods, Local Places
U.S. Census Bureau

PLANNING ASSISTANCE APPROACH



COOL & CONNECTED SCHEDULE

- ◎ Pilot round call to communities closed February 2016.
- ◎ Partner communities now being selected.
- ◎ Spring-summer-fall 2016: working with partner communities.
- ◎ Additional round of partnerships expected in the coming year.
- ◎ To stay informed, subscribe to EPA Smart Growth Listserve: smart_growth_list_subscribe@lists.epa.gov.

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