



Community Action Plan for Johnstown, PA

LOCAL FOODS, LOCAL PLACES TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

December 2020



For more information about Local Foods, Local Places visit:

<https://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/local-foods-local-places>

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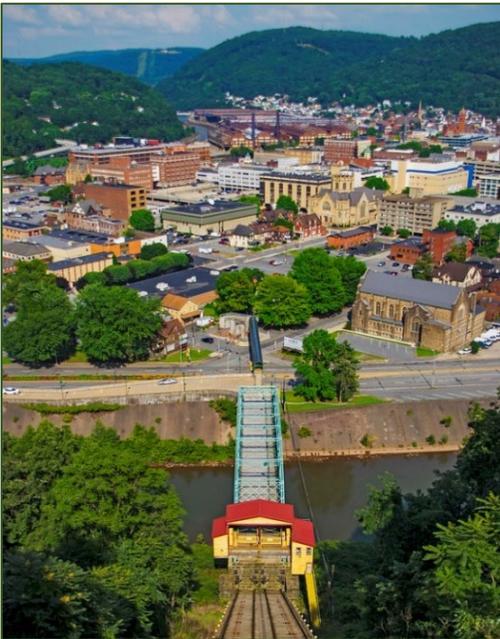
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COMMUNITY STORY

In southwestern Cambria County, Johnstown, Pennsylvania, is situated in the Allegheny Mountains at the Conemaugh River's confluence of two of its tributaries, the Stonycreek and Little Conemaugh Rivers. The rivers are part of an abundance of natural resources, including coal, iron ore, and limestone, that supported Johnstown's development into a booming steel town by the late 19th century. Johnstown formed through the consolidation of a series of villages strung along the rivers.¹ The city had a population of 5,150 people when its first iron foundry opened in 1852 and swelled to over 30,000 people by 1890.² The population doubled over the following 30 years as steel plants and related industries proliferated. The city's growth plateaued in the middle of the 20th century, followed by a period of decline in the latter half of the century that continues to this day.



Figure 1 – The Conemaugh River and its tributaries provided water needed in the metalworking processes that formed Johnstown's industrial economy, but they also brought three major floods in 1889, 1936, and 1977. Image credit: Johnstown Area Heritage Association



Deindustrialization and flooding contributed to Johnstown's economic and demographic decline. As industrial production shifted offshore in the 1970s and 1980's, steel mills in Johnstown closed or laid-off workers. The city's largest manufacturer, Bethlehem Steel, downsized from 11,800 employees in 1973 to just 2,100 in 1982.³ In addition to the national economic trend of deindustrialization, the city suffered a major flood in 1977. The flood took 85 lives and damaged homes, businesses, and factories to the toll of over \$300 million.⁴ The city had lost 19.4% of its population by the end of the decade, dropping from 42,221 in 1970 to 34,221 in 1980.⁵ The city's population has decreased steadily since, and the economic troubles persist to this day.

Figure 2 – The Inclined Plane is a vestige of Johnstown's industrial heritage. The funicular was operated by the Cambria Iron Company (later Bethlehem Steel) to provide a commute for workers living in new high-ground communities built after the 1889 flood. Today the rail is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and draws tourists from across the country. Image credit: Ron Cogswell

¹ Johnstown Pennsylvania Information Source Online. "Valley Villages". <http://johnstownpa.com/History/hist13.html>

² Johnstown Area Heritage Center. "History of Steel in Johnstown". <https://www.jaha.org/attractions/heritage-discovery-center/johnstown-history/history-steel-johnstown/>

³ Ibid.

⁴ Johnstown Area Heritage Center. "1936 & 1977 Floods". <https://www.jaha.org/attractions/johnstown-flood-museum/flood-history/1936-1977-floods/>

⁵ Ibid.

Today, Johnstown is the poorest community in Pennsylvania. The city's population has dropped to 19,195 people as of 2019.⁶ The city has been in structural deficit per the Commonwealth's Act 47 since 1992, the year that Bethlehem Steel shut down its Johnstown operations. The city faces an 8% unemployment rate, and 38% of its residents live in poverty.⁷ In addition to poverty, Johnstown residents face food insecurity and poor health outcomes, with as much as a third of the population having low income and low access to food stores.⁸ In response to the economic troubles, the city has partnered with community stakeholders and outside organizations to embark on several transformative revitalization projects.

Johnstown's endeavors are driven by the "Johnstown Redevelopment Strategy" created by a multi-stakeholder civic organization called "Johnstown Vision Together 2025". Vision Together 2025 worked over 2018-2020 to create a shared vision, to form an organizational structure for implementing the vision, and to identify a number of "catalytic projects" that will be the top priorities for action in the coming years. See <https://johnstown25.com/>. Among Vision Together's eight priority goals, the goals to "Improve Health and Wellness", to "Redevelop Properties", to "Modernize Infrastructure", and to "Promote Johnstown as a Desirable Place to Live, Work & Visit" are the community goals that frame Johnstown's Local Foods, Local Places action plan.

With respect to the food security, food access, and community health goals of Vision Together 2025, and the goals and priorities of this LFLP action plan, the greater Johnstown community is working through a "Food Security Coalition" to meet food needs in the community through coordinated action, new food delivery systems, and new institutional programs.



Figure 3 – Low access to healthy foods is a critical problem facing Johnstown today. According to the USDA Food Access Atlas, the city has only 0.03% of farmers markets per 1,000 residents. The Vision 2025 projects' focus on food access make them crucial to Johnstown's revitalization. Image credit: Jennifer Tiffany



Figure 4 – The Johnstown Train Station presents an opportunity for downtown revitalization and many concepts have been discussed for possibilities here, including but not limited to indoor market, retail, or other food related programs or purposes. Image credit: Mitchazenia

⁶ U.S. Census Bureau, Annual Estimates of the Resident Population for Incorporated Places in Pennsylvania: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2019

⁷ U.S. Census Bureau, 2014-2018 ACS 5-Year Estimates

⁸ USDA Food Access Atlas

With respect to the goals of Vision Together 2025's community placemaking and redevelopment efforts, the City of Johnstown and its non-profit, community and regional partners have embarked on key redevelopment projects that could help lift Johnstown out of poverty and boost the city's quality of life. The first project is a partnership among the City transit provider CamTran, the Cambria County Metropolitan Planning Organization, the Johnstown Area Heritage Association, and PennDOT to revitalize the grand and historic, but deteriorated and largely vacant Johnstown Train Station. The Train Station revitalization project will restore the station buildings, upgrade transportation infrastructure, and activate the building's vacant spaces and surrounding vacant lots as a downtown center for heritage tourism, visitor attractions, and activities for local residents. Johnstown proposes to install a fresh food market, farm and craft vendor stalls, retail, a culinary and hospitality sector training institute, and tourist/visitor amenities at the Train Station.

The second placemaking and redevelopment project is to expand and improve Johnstown's network of complete streets and walking/biking trails. This type of investment will boost community health, quality of life, and Johnstown's prospects as a recreational tourism destination. Johnstown seeks to fund and implement its "Urban Connectivity Plan" of key trail connections, the "Main Street Greenway" complete street upgrade in downtown, and the "Iron-to-Arts Corridor" project to connect community assets related to Johnstown's metalmaking heritage and its vibrant arts community.

A third project is a partnership with Food21 of Pennsylvania to develop a large-scale hydroponic greenhouse and aquaculture operation powered by a combined heat and power system. This partnership aims to create a major commercial jobs and workforce training center focused on urban agriculture. The Food21 organization seeks support from Johnstown in finding and outfitting a suitable 7-10-acre vacant parcel for this operation which could assist brownfield redevelopment.

In 2019, Johnstown requested assistance through the *Local Foods, Local Places (LFLP)* program to facilitate the Vision Together 2025 projects' realization to increase access to healthy foods, promote active transportation, and boost creative placemaking to reactivate a struggling downtown. 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, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the Northern Border Regional Commission. Johnstown, Pennsylvania, was one of 16 communities across the United States selected to participate in the program in 2020.

A Local Foods, Local Places *Project Steering Committee* was formed in preparation for this technical assistance award and comprises a variety of community partners (Figure 6). A technical assistance team of consultants and multiple federal and state agency partners (Figure 5) led the process. The Steering Committee expressed a desire to learn from the best practices and experiences of communities that have been through the Local Foods, Local Places processes. The Steering Committee believed that the technical assistance could help bring critical partners to the table to find consensus on moving forward with the Vision Together 2025 project.

Specifically, the committee sought assistance with the initiation of a year-round farmers market and how food hubs can create job creation and revitalization within the community. 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 Johnstown’s goals.

Local Foods, Local Places Technical Assistance Team

- **Hollis Maye-Key**, Environmental Protection Specialist, EPA HQ Office of Community Revitalization
- **Samantha Beers**, Director of Enforcement Compliance and Environment, EPA Region 3
- **Betty Barnes**, Environmental Protection Specialist, EPA Region 3
- **Andrew Taylor**, Environmental Protection Specialist, EPA Region 3 (Philadelphia)
- **Lynn Vozniak**, Lender Relations Specialist, Small Business Administration
- **Sasha Pokrovskaya**, Architect, USDA AMS Transportation and Marketing
- **Ron Batcher**, Architect, USDA AMS Transportation and Marketing
- **Americo Vega-Labiosa**, Agricultural Marketing Specialist, USDA AMS Transportation and Marketing
- **Gary Reed**, Outreach Director – Western PA, USDA RD
- **Holly Fowler**, Northbound Ventures Consulting, LLC (Consultant)
- **Jason Espie**, EPR, P.C. (Consultant)

Figure 5 - Technical assistance team.

Local Foods, Local Places Project Steering Committee

- **Leanna Bird**, Project Manager, 1889 Jefferson Center for Population Health
- **Matt Ward**, CEO, Sustainable Strategies DC LLC
- **Linda Thomson**, President, JARI (Johnstown Area Regional Industries)
- **Angie Berzonski**, Associate Director, Community Foundation for the Alleghenies
- **Ryan Kieta**, Coordinator, Vision Together 2025
- **Richard Burkert**, President / CEO, JAHA (Johnstown Area Heritage Association)
- **Sue Mann**, President, 1889 Foundation
- **Jeannine McMillan**, Executive Director, Community Care HUB - 1889 Jefferson Center for Population Health
- **Karen Struble-Meyers**, Executive Director, United Way of the Laurel Highlands

Figure 6 - Steering committee members.

ENGAGEMENT

The technical assistance engagement process for Local Foods, Local Places has three phases, illustrated in Figure 7 below. 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 maintaining momentum generated during the workshop. The community workshop occurred over two days from October 1st to October 2nd, and the activities from those events are described below. Workshop exercise results are summarized in **Appendix A**, a list of workshop participants is provided in **Appendix B**, slides from the virtual community tour in **Appendix C**, a data profile in **Appendix D**, funding resources in **Appendix E**, and general references in **Appendix F**.

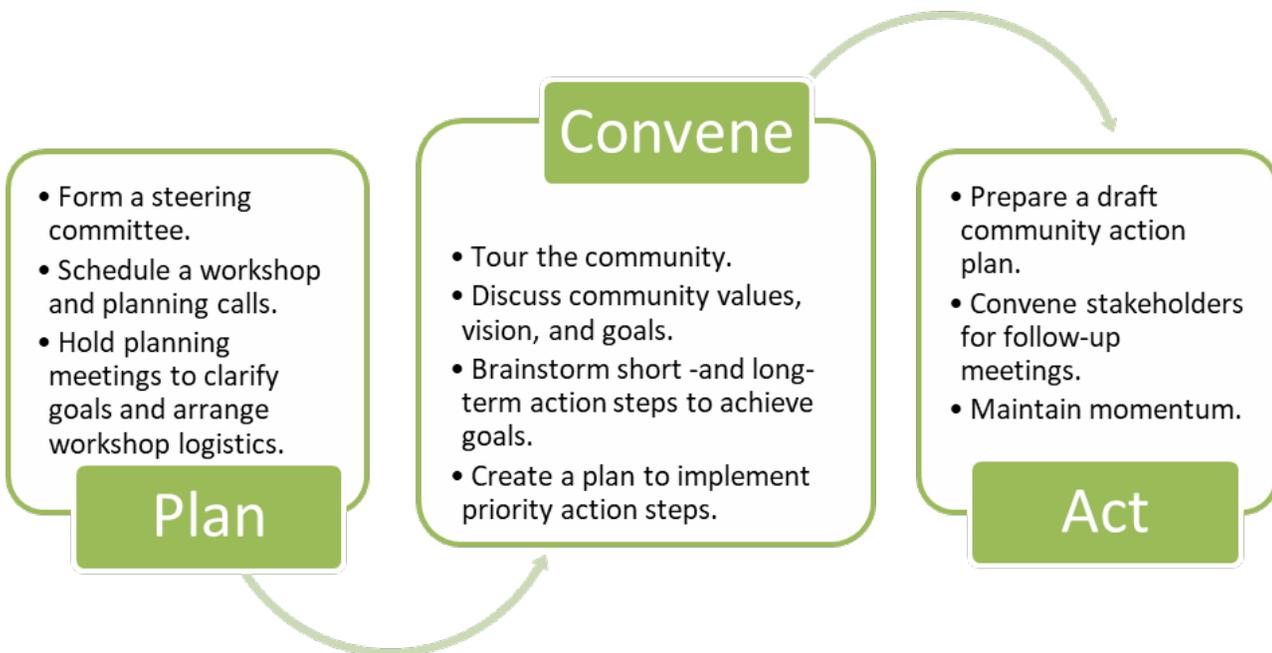


Figure 7 - Local Foods, Local Places technical assistance process diagram.

VIRTUAL WORKSHOP

The virtual workshop commenced on the morning of Thursday, October 1, 2020. The opening session began with introductions from each attendee, who expressed what most excited them about the process in one to three words. An overview of the Local Foods, Local Places program, and process followed the introductions. After the program overview, the technical assistance team introduced the four workshop goals and passed the presentation to the virtual community tour's steering committee.

Community Tour

A virtual community tour provided an overview of the city's downtown and food assets. The tour highlighted several assets in downtown Johnstown, including Central Park, thriving businesses and restaurants, the Downtown Farmers' Market, and a popular senior housing community. The tour discussed the popularity of the existing farmers' market and introduced the potential for the Johnstown Train Station to serve as the site for a year-round, food-centered hub for residents, tourists, and downtown visitors. Ample trails and recreation facilities around downtown were discussed, along with the famous Johnstown Inclined Plane and the proposed Iron-to-Arts Corridor.

The tour also contextualized Johnstown within the food and agricultural landscape of Cambria County. The tour noted several successful farmers market examples around the county and a day and night market in nearby Westmoreland County. The county's markets exhibit various vendors, such as produce, meats, bread, flowers, honey, jams, juices, and many more. The tour noted that the bulk of Cambria County's 79,000 acres of farmland are located in the county's central and northern parts.

The tour concluded with a discussion of several essential food access assets in the city. The city has an abundance of active organizations and programs to increase healthy food access, including Produce to People, Summer Youth Café, and the Senior Box program. In addition to organizational programs, the city has eight community gardens, with the largest housed at the Sandyvale Memorial Gardens and Conservancy. Sandyvale is an important food system asset to the city. It offers various educational and community programs, including teaching community members and groups interested in starting new community gardens and supplying local social service programs and soup kitchens with fresh produce. Finally, the tour covered the Field-to-Fork Agricultural



Figure 8 – The Sandyvale facilities offer a range of community educational courses and resources on gardening and food production. The new project assisted by Food21 of Pennsylvania will bolster the food production resources offered by Sandyvale and increase access to fresh, local food. Image credit: Sandyvale Memorial Gardens and Conservancy

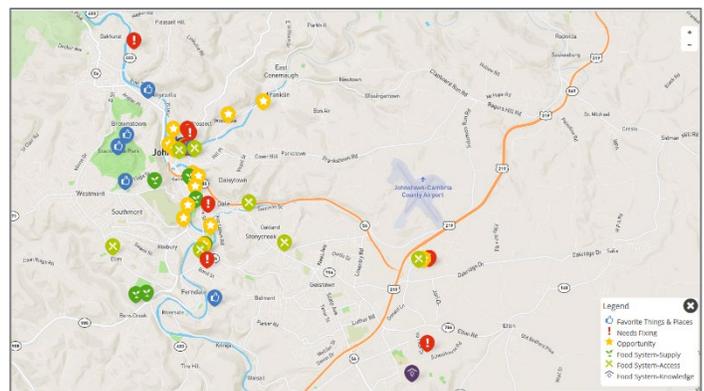


Figure 9 – An asset mapping exercise allowed attendees to identify places in the community that contribute or could contribute to the local food economy, as well as quick fixes, food system assets and partners. A complete map and legend of the activity are in Appendix A. Image credit: EPR

Incubator at the Greater Johnstown Career and Technology Center. Established in 2016, the incubator seeks to provide shared kitchen space for small-scale food processors and is supported by the Southern Alleghenies Planning Commission and Community Foundation for the Alleghenies.

Appendix C contains the slide deck used in the virtual tour. The morning session concluded with three quick response exercises asking participants to share in the Zoom chat something they believe about local food and their community. In small groups, participants imagined future headlines that reflected the improvements that the goals aspire to make in Johnstown.

Stories, Exercises, and Brainstorming

The first day sessions involved case stories, small group exercises, and action brainstorming. The technical assistance team provided a handful of case stories of food projects that helped increase food access and contribute to vibrant downtowns. After the case stories, attendees broke into two groups and participated in the group exercises described in the two following sections. The small group exercises helped attendees to think about specific actions that could support the workshop goals within the next couple of years.

One small group participated in a brainstorming exercise to identify and discuss assets and challenges related to the community's four workshop goals. The assets included things working well in Johnstown to build on the food economy and revitalize neighborhood centers. The challenges included existing barriers to achieving the goals and what would be needed to overcome those.

Another small workshop participant group engaged in an online interactive mapping exercise using the Social Pinpoint platform. This mapping asked participants to place a dot on locations related to one of six categories: Favorite Things & Places, Needs Fixing, Opportunity, Food-System Supply, Food-System Access, and Food-System Knowledge. Participants identified 62 points of interest on the interactive map. **Appendix A** contains the full results of all workshop exercises.

"Some Favorite Things and Places" included popular local restaurants, food producers, and hiking and recreation activities in Stackhouse Park. "Needs Fixing" comments mainly focused on food access issues, such as a lack of neighborhood grocery stores and the fact that the farmers' market vendors cannot accept

This I Believe...

LOCAL FOOD...

- Should be accessible and affordable to all
- Is the building block of rural development in our region
- Can revive a struggling place
- Can provide more accessibility to our most vulnerable residents and spur great economic development
- Needs to get to more people in need of healthy food
- Is essential
- Makes people more invested in their community and their health

MY COMMUNITY...:

- Can support tourism in Johnstown
- Is resilient and determined to be better
- Can work together as a team
- Can be healthier and has so many opportunities
- Can collaborate to provide education on healthy nutrition
- Needs more community gardens
- Has a bright future ahead
- Has potential to enact a lot of change

Figure 10 - Vision and values exercise highlights. See Appendix A for more detail.

Supplemental Nutrition Access Program (SNAP) benefits. “Opportunity Points” mainly identified locations for new grocery stores, food retail sites, and sites for additional farmers markets. The three Food Supply markers were used to identify existing food resources such as food banks, community gardens, and educational centers and resources.

The first day concluded with action brainstorming. Attendees drafted multiple actions for whichever of the goals they were most excited about, working on a shared Google Slides document. After the brainstorming session, the technical assistance team reviewed the various actions, de-duplicated them, and put them in categories for ease of viewing. A Google Form was created, and each action listed for purposes of voting. The form was emailed to all meeting registrants the evening of day one, allowing those who registered to weigh in on voting even if they missed the day's sessions.



Figure 11 – Action detailing work occurred in Zoom breakout rooms, focused on one goal at a time. Participants in smaller groups used a shared Google Slides deck (screenshot above) which listed each of the actions, the voting results and then an accompanying table to complete the why, when, who, and how of each action’s implementation. Image credit: EPR

Prioritization, Detailing, Wrap up

The second day of the workshop, October 2, 2020, entailed action prioritization, action detailing, and a wrap-up session. For the action prioritization, each attendee could vote on up to twelve actions that they were most excited about or thought needed to happen first. The three to five actions that received the highest number of votes under each of the goals were then advanced to the action detailing session, with some consideration given to grouping and some re-wording. The action detailing work session involved participants working in small groups, who were given authorship over each action. Details for each action were drafted, such as why it's important, who will need to be involved, how long the action will take, and what resources are available and necessary for success. The results of the action detailing are included below in the section called *Action Plan*. The workshop concluded with a wrap-up session where participants presented their action detailing work and discussed any themes or takeaways they learned during the process. For a final exercise, attendees were asked to put into the chat either an “offer” for something that they would like to do to advance the action plan, or an “ask” for what they expect from the process moving forward.



Figure 12 - Group Zoom Photo, many smiles

ACTION PLAN

The final goals and supporting actions are listed below. The tables that follow provide additional detail for each action.

GOAL 1: Improve coordination between community partners to advance food system initiatives.

- Action 1.1: Establish buy-in from local stakeholder groups that Vision Together 2025 should be the home for a Local Food Systems Coordinator position.
- Action 1.2: Establish a comprehensive inventory of food related resources (e.g. pantries, community meals, markets, churches, farms in Cambria) with contact information and a description of what each provides.

Goal 2: Increase access to local foods that promote improved health outcomes.

- Action 2.1: Research Veggie Rx and Fresh Food Farmacy Programs Program for Cambria County, including underserved residents of Johnstown.

- Action 2.2: Host focus groups to understand needs and challenges of food security (e.g. access, affordability, utilization) by stakeholder group (e.g. low income, youth). One specific focus group might be parents of young children.
- Action 2.3: Research then create a user-friendly system, acceptable to vendors, that will increase or expand acceptance of SNAP/EBT, in addition to Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) vouchers at the Johnstown Farmers Market.
- Action 2.4: Facilitate connections between local producers and key buyers (restaurants, schools, hospitals, etc.).

Goal 3: Introduce place-making best practices to enhance Johnstown as a destination for living, working, and visiting.

- Action 3.1: Convene key local stakeholders to determine the desirability, feasibility, and strategy of establishing the empty space at the Johnstown Train Station as a vibrant destination for both local residents and visitors, which includes a fresh market-grocery, food retail, and culinary training and entrepreneurship.
- Action 3.2: Submit request to USDA for no-cost design services for restoration of train station as a food-centered destination.
- Action 3.3: Approach City Planning staff about activating the vacant spaces around the train station and nearby neighborhoods.
- Action 3.4: Boost funding and implementation of the Johnstown Urban Connectivity Plan, and ensure that the Connectivity Plan integrates access by walking/biking/transit to community food assets.

Goal 4: Help connect food entrepreneurs to resources to establish and grow their businesses in Johnstown.

- Action 4.1: Explore expansion of key seasonal farmers markets at Sandyvale Gardens, Central Park and other markets with pilot “Night Market” events that combine produce vendors with arts and craft vendors, music, activities from bricks-and-mortar establishments, and public gatherings.
- Action 4.2: Examine how, who, and where to best provide training and resources to farmers, youth, and entrepreneurs on hydroponics, solar energy, water filtration, greenhouse facilities, bioremediation, and other non-traditional revenue streams.
- Action 4.3: Identify the regulatory, capacity, facility, marketing, and other barriers that limited the use of the Field to Fork community kitchen and eventually work to overcome these barriers and optimize existing facilities and programs to help food/ag and culinary businesses startup.

GOAL 1: Improve coordination between community partners to advance food system initiatives.

Johnstown is a community in transition, working to emerge from decades of structural bankruptcy. With support from the Carnegie Mellon University Remaking Cities Institute, the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, and other sponsors, the community created a redevelopment strategy composed of catalytic projects and programs, known collectively as *Vision Together 2025*. Currently, within this community collaboration, there are health and food relief organizations, but none dedicated to food systems planning, coordination and policy. Johnstown would like to grow its capacity and focus on food systems broadly to support the community’s health, food security, and economic objectives.

Action 1.1: Establish buy-in from local stakeholder groups that Vision Together 2025 should be the home for a Local Food Systems Coordinator position.

What this is and why it is important	Current organizations have limited capacity to fulfill desired initiatives that require dedicated staff rather than relying on volunteers. There needs to be a central point/hub for coordinating between organizations with diverse focus areas (e.g., policy, food insecurity, agriculture). Justification for this role would fall under the Vision Together Priority Goal #3 - improve health and wellness.
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Brainstorm position objectives ▪ Survey for open-ended feedback from ‘supporting cast’ (incorporate objectives above) ▪ Position description drafted ▪ Funders consulted ▪ A vote by Vision Together 2025 ▪ Coordinator position confirmed as a priority with funding sources attached to it. ▪ Other community stakeholders become engaged and demonstrate support for the role
Timeframe	6-12 months
Lead	Vision Together 2025 Health and Wellness Committee (Sue Mann, Goal Leader)
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Vision Together 2025 Executive Director (TBD) ▪ Vision Together 2025 Executive Committee and Board ▪ 1889 Foundation ▪ 1889 Jefferson Center for Population Health ▪ United Way of the Laurel Highlands ▪ Saint Vincent de Paul ▪ Laurel Highlands Visitors Bureau, Visit Johnstown ▪ Cambria County Backpack Project, (Kylee Doyle, Coordinator) ▪ Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank, (Karen Dreyer) ▪ Johnstown Area Regional Industries (JARI) ▪ Sandyvale Memorial Gardens and Conservancy ▪ Community Foundation for the Alleghenies ▪ Focus group participants from Goal 2

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Farm community Allies/Representatives (e.g., PA Farm Bureau, Penn State Extension, Western Division of Farm Bureau) ▪ Farmers/Producers – Carissa Itle Westrick, Valewood Farms as connector ▪ Cambria Regional Chamber Agriculture Committee (in development)
Needed resources and possible sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Results of Focus Group from Goal 2 of target population ▪ Time to research similar positions in other places, and benchmark salary ▪ Job description ▪ Meeting time with stakeholders under supporting cast ▪ Eventual funders of the position: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ USDA Local Food Promotions Program (LFPP) - https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/fmpp ○ USD Community Food grant program ○ 1889 Foundation ○ Community Foundation for the Alleghenies

Action 1.2: Establish a comprehensive inventory of food related resources (e.g. pantries, community meals, markets, churches, farms in Cambria) with contact information and a description of what each provides.

What this is and why it is important	A comprehensive inventory of food related resources will serve as a one-stop resource for organizations and community members to find what food related resources are available. It will help to avoid duplication of efforts among organizations for shared information and help to identify stakeholders. The inventory list can be shared on Johnstown social media pages/groups, organization websites, 211, at food distributions, etc. Eventually the list could be maintained as part of the Local Food Systems Coordinator position.
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ First version of the list is compiled ▪ Forms (print, web) established ▪ Methodology for maintaining the inventory regularly is established so it can be a true “living resource” for the community ▪ Website or sub-site that includes public access inventory of food security resources and PASA sustainable agriculture foodshed mapping link for Cambria County farms
Timeframe	3-6 months
Lead	Karen Struble-Myers, United Way of the Laurel Highlands, Food Security Coalition
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank ▪ PA Sustainable Agriculture (currently offering communities support to map and document local food shed) ▪ United Way of the Laurel Highlands ▪ Saint Vincent de Paul Ministries ▪ 211 (primarily health and human services) ▪ Churches ▪ JARI (food start-ups) ▪ PA Farm Bureau, Joseph Diamond

Needed resources and possible sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Barb Zaborowski/ Michelle Myers – Penn Highlands Community College ▪ Cambria County Backpack Project Intern time (potentially a stipend for this capacity) ▪ Design assistance (for now can be done in house at United Way) ▪ Information from organizational partners / those that need to be included in the list ▪
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Goal 2: Increase access to local foods that promote improved health outcomes.

According to the County Health Rankings and Roadmaps, Cambria County, where Johnstown is situated, ranks 64th out of 67 counties in Pennsylvania in terms of health outcomes. The rate of poverty is 38%, more than twice that of the county and three times that of the state (13%). As of 2015, one-third of the population was classified as low income/low access by the USDA Food Atlas and there are just 0.03% farmers markets per 1,000 people. While there are several full-service grocery stores in Johnstown, there are still many who cannot afford to buy groceries and may also be challenged to take advantage of emergency food services due to mobility or status. Food insecurity is linked to higher rates of obesity and other diseases, which could be mitigated with improved access to and consumption of fresh fruits, vegetables, and other nutrient dense ingredients.

Action 2.1: Research Veggie Rx and Fresh Food Farmacy Programs for Cambria County, including underserved residents of Johnstown.

What this is and why it is important	Rather than just having the suggestion of a physician to eat healthier, it provides those with diet related diseases or other qualifying conditions with important information and assistance to access fresh fruits and vegetables.
Measures of success	Determine elements of and feasibility to implement such a program.
Timeframe	3-6 months
Lead	Vision Together 2025 Health and Wellness Committee (Sue Mann, Goal Leader)
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Geisinger Health Food Farmacy program ▪ Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank (Eliza Kuhn) ▪ Allegheny Health Network ▪ Conemaugh Health System ▪ Conemaugh Diabetes Institute ▪ Cardiac Rehab programs ▪ Adagio Health (nutrition program / Southwest Wellness Partners) – Diana Mihalcik (regional coordinator) ▪ Chan Soon-Shiong Medical Center at Windber ▪ Alternative Community Resource Program ▪ Andy Rush, UPMC Somerset ▪ Penn State Hershey Health ▪ Other LFLP Communities leads who have explored similar actions (e.g., Cortland, NY - Seven Valleys Health Coalition) ▪ Highmark/UPMC insurances (potential sponsor)

<p>Needed resources and possible sources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Time ● Information ● Geisinger “Play Book” (guide for communities, possibly available at no cost); Geisinger Food Farmacy: https://www.geisinger.org/freshfoodfarmacy ● Research from other successful programs ● Interest from potential funders if determined feasible
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Action 2.2: Host focus groups to understand needs and challenges of food security (e.g. access, affordability, utilization) by stakeholder group (e.g. low income, youth). One specific focus group might be parents of young children.

<p>What this is and why it is important</p>	<p>These focus groups will look for feedback from members of the community utilizing food resources or in need of food resources as opposed to focusing on agencies providing the resources. This will serve to understand the needs and challenges of those that would be utilizing food resources rather than guessing or presuming what is needed. A cooking demonstration, taste testing, or another incentive can be used to draw in participants for the focus groups.</p>
<p>Measures of success</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Community buy-in, collaboration, and the hosting of listening sessions ▪ A few concrete needs/projects identified as a result of hosting focus groups
<p>Timeframe</p>	<p>3-6 months</p>
<p>Lead</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Douglas Beri Jr, Indiana County Conservation District ▪ United Way Food Security Coalition (Karen Struble-Meyers) ▪ 1889 Jefferson Center for Population Health (Leanna Bird, Jeannine McMillan) ▪ Community leads in consultation with City of Johnstown and United Neighborhoods of Greater Johnstown
<p>Supporting cast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Underserved community residents (e.g., Produce to People) ▪ Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank (Keelan McDonald) ▪ Community Care HUB participants and community health workers ▪ Vision Together Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion / United Neighborhoods Capture Teams ▪ Churches (e.g., Rev. Sylvia King) ▪ Rotary Club (Dr. Mary Berge) ▪ Flood City Youth Fitness Academy (FWA Gym) ▪ Senior Centers ▪ Food for Families ▪ Peer Empowerment Network Drop-In Center has a beautiful huge kitchen and would like to do more healthy cooking demos there ▪ New Hope Community Church ▪ Greater Johnstown YMCA ▪ Sandylvale Memorial Gardens & Conservancy ▪ Kylee Doyle, Cambria County Backpack Project (CCBP) Coordinator has connections to parents

<p>Needed resources and possible sources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Greater Johnstown School District (GJSD)/Communities in Schools ▪ Data from City of Johnstown “Comprehensive Planning “ neighborhoods sessions ▪ Summary of GPCFB focus groups – Keelan McDonald ▪ Sponsorships ▪ Marketing/printing flyers ▪ Proposed budget of \$1,500 - \$2,500 (food, participant stipends, chef/nutrition educator) ▪ Primanti Brothers (identified possible sponsor) ▪ Utility companies (identified possible sponsor) ▪ Getting to Grocery Toolkit - https://www.changelabsolutions.org/product/getting-grocery ▪ Coordinated Grocery Store Attraction Strategies - https://www.policylink.org/sites/default/files/groceryattraction_final.pdf
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Action 2.3: Research then create a user-friendly system, acceptable to vendors, that will increase or expand acceptance of SNAP/EBT, in addition to Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) vouchers at the Johnstown Farmers Market.

<p>What this is and why it is important</p>	<p>Resolving this issue supports both local growers financially, as well as low-income residents who gain access to more local healthy food. It also lowers the high cost barrier to fresh produce. With a token system, each individual vendor doesn’t have to figure out SNAP/EBT. This could be a pilot that then is transferable knowledge to other markets. This process will make it easier for the market(s) to track clientele participation which can support future development efforts.</p>
<p>Measures of success</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Phase 1: Establish SNAP/EBT token system ▪ Phase 2: Funding secured to pilot a match program.
<p>Timeframe</p>	<p>6 months (in advance of next outdoor season)</p>
<p>Lead</p>	<p>Keelan McDonald, Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank</p>
<p>Supporting cast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Darlene Livingston, PA Farm Link ▪ Jacob Zerby, Downtown Johnstown Market Manager ▪ Brian Moyer, Penn State Extension ▪ Farmers Market Coalition ▪ United Way of the Laurel Highlands, Food Security Coalition ▪ Local philanthropic funders (for matching donations, etc.)
<p>Needed resources and possible sources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Time ▪ Volunteers or nutrition interns to support communications ▪ SNAP/EBT terminal ▪ Information about bank fees and third-party processors ▪ \$300 for SNAP/EBT terminal? ▪ Look for state funding or opportunities to secure a terminal through existing state resources ▪ Possible SCBP (specialty crop block grant) funding (used in Indiana County)

Action 2.4: Facilitate connections between local producers and key buyers (restaurants, schools, hospitals, etc.).

What this is and why it is important	Local producers have limited time and resources for marketing and channel/client development. Different buyers have different requirements (food safety, buying minimums, liability/insurance). It is not always a transparent process of how public bids go out from public institutions. Relationship building may take various forms including a website, application, in person meet and greets, etc.
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Evaluation of producer needs to scale or meet needs of buyers ▪ Establishment of Cambria Regional Chamber Agriculture Committee ▪ Useful information of participating parties is shared (ability of producers and requirements/needs of buyers) ▪ # of contracts established ▪ Volume / \$ of locally produced food selling into local establishments and institutions
Timeframe	9-12 months
Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Leanna Bird, 1889 Jefferson Center for Population Health ▪ Doug Beri, Indiana County Conservation District ▪ PASA Sustainable Agriculture (Foodshed Mapping Project), Tabitha Barbarato
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Joe Diamond, Pennsylvania Farm Bureau ▪ Carissa Westrick, Vale Wood Farms ▪ Darlene Livingston, PA Farm Link ▪ Penn State Extension ▪ Cambria Regional Chamber Agriculture Committee (to be developed) ▪ Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank (forthcoming vendor landscape information) – Karen Dreyer ▪ Local growers (Cambria and surrounding counties) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Valewood Farms ○ Yarnicks ▪ Local buyers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Nutrition Group (food service management company for senior centers, Area Agency on Aging, summer meals program, Greater Johnstown School District) ○ Balance Restaurant ○ Mill House ○ Classic Elements ○ Giant Eagle ○ Eat n’ Park ▪ Food service procurement personnel ▪ Local food service distributors
Needed resources and possible sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ JARI’s Procurement Technical Assistance Center ▪ Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank PASS program ▪ Community Foundation for the Alleghenies Cambria/Indiana Farmer Assistance Fund ▪ Farmer’s Market Planning and Policies toolkit: https://www.psrc.org/sites/default/files/blueprints-compplan.pdf

Goal 3: Introduce place-making best practices to enhance Johnstown as a destination for living, working, and visiting.

Johnstown seeks to boost its economy, revitalize its downtown, create opportunities for meaningful employment, and improve local quality of life, through growth of the food economy. One consensus approach in Johnstown, as reflected in Vision Together 2025’s priorities for catalytic projects, is to revitalize the grand yet deteriorated and largely vacant Johnstown Train Station, and to boost walkability and connectivity in Johnstown through a more robust trail system.

The historic Johnstown Train Station sits in the heart of downtown Johnstown. Located at 47 Walnut Street, the station is actively served by Amtrak, Greyhound and regional commuter buses, but the building is largely vacant, underutilized, and surrounded by empty parking lots. PennDOT joined Johnstown to complete a market assessment and feasibility study in 2017 that suggested the train station be repurposed, with a focus on food economy uses that will both benefit local citizens and attract visitors to Johnstown. This food destination could include a year-round indoor food market or healthy foods grocery, food and beverage retail operations, and a new Restaurant/Culinary Management Institute. The Johnstown Area Heritage Association has championed this concept but has not had the capacity or funding to realize its components. The community hopes that the Local Foods, Local Places action planning process will revisit this opportunity and determine if and how to move forward with food-related or other uses of this important and beautiful community asset.

Action 3.1: Convene key local stakeholders in new Train Station Task Force to determine the desirability, feasibility, and strategy of establishing the empty space at the Johnstown Train Station as a food destination to attract both local and tourism users, food market-grocery, food retail, culinary training, and other uses.

<p>What this is and why it is important</p>	<p>Located downtown among key community assets, the Johnstown Train Station is a grand and historically important structure with active Amtrak, commuter train, and bus service for both local citizens and the visitor/tourism economy. However, 90% of the Train Station complex’s usable indoor space, and the bulk of the empty lots surrounding the Train Station, are vacant and underutilized. Further, there are major deferred maintenance, building restoration, and capital improvements costing millions of dollars that must be undertaken to revive the Train Station for productive community uses. A feasibility study identifying uses of interior spaces as a Food Center has been completed, and community stakeholders generally support the establishment of a downtown food market, food court, food pop ups, coffee shops, retail offerings, a Johnstown Visitors Center, and potentially a culinary school or community kitchen as ways to activate the Train Station space. However, there is not yet consensus or a business plan for what is the best, most feasible, and most supported reuse option for the train station. Nor is there any confirmed approach about what entity/organization would be responsible for establishing and managing this food facility and operation. This action item would convene a group of key stakeholders to confirm a community consensus on reuse of the Train Station, coordinate with key authorities such as the <i>Pennsylvania Department of</i></p>
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	<p><i>Transportation and Amtrak</i> on future uses, and reach out to possible partners to continue the conversation about what could / should happen for future uses of the Train Station.</p>
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A plan of proposed uses in interior and exterior Train Station spaces is confirmed, with support of USDA architectural services, and that plan is shared with community and public stakeholders and affirmed as the preferred future use of the Train Station complex. ▪ The Train Station activation plan has local food components that boost the downtown, enhance access to healthy foods, and supports the tourism sector. ▪ Penn Highlands Community College or other institution creates culinary and food service/hospitality training institute in Train Station which complements other Food Center uses ▪ Johnstown leadership secures commitments from key funding agencies to fund the capital and operational costs of the envisioned reuse activities. ▪ The Johnstown community identifies the best local entity to manage and steward the future operations of the Baggage Section of the Train Station and approach potential private sector partners about running the operation. Note: The Waiting Room and Concourse are the other sections of the Train Station, and the Waiting Room as of publication of this document is leased to the Artist Blacksmith Association of North America (ABANA) for use as a gallery and headquarters. ▪ The Train Station commences new uses and activities in the Train Station within 24 months.
Timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Train Station Reuse Task Force formed and commences in early 2021. ▪ USDA architectural concept planning conducted in early 2021. ▪ Community engagement & consensus-building on reuse plan conduct by Summer 2021 ▪ Task Force identifies local entity to lead Train Station activation, and potential private partner, by end of Summer 2021. ▪ Pop-up and temporary uses launched by end of 2021. ▪ Capital build-out and improvements in 2022-2023. ▪ Launch of long-term uses in 2023+
Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Richard Burkert, JAHA ▪ John Dubnansky, City of Johnstown ▪ Ethan Imhoff, Cambria County MPO/Vision Together 2025 ▪ Rose Lucey-Noll, CamTran ▪ Linda Thomson, JARI
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ryan Kieta, Vision Together 2025 ▪ Jacob Zerby, City of Johnstown ▪ Craig Saylor (Team Leader, Vision Together 2025 “Train Station Capture Team”) ▪ Amy Bradley ▪ Pennsylvania Highlands Community College ▪ Private sector food market and retail operators ▪ Nearby businesses, including:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Crossfit Excursion (Kara and JP Skelley) ○ Involve youth, young professionals, diverse voices in the planning process ○ Krista and Mike Rager, Paracoat Technologies ○ Other local vendors (e.g., crafters)
Needed resources and possible sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ USDA Design Assistance ▪ PennDOT design & engineering resources/support ▪ Amtrak capital funding for infrastructure upgrades ▪ Private sector food center developer/operator ▪ Interested food vendors

Action 3.2: Submit request to USDA for no-cost design services for restoration of train station as food hub, guided by Train Station Task Force.

What this is and why it is important	The idea for an indoor year-round food market/retail hub has been considered since at least 2017 as an option for reactivating the train station. This space could accommodate a culinary program collaboration with Penn Highlands Community College or another entity. This initial step would lead to a design that could be used to promote the project to community stakeholders, potential funders, and potential private sector partners/users of the future food hub facilities.
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Application is completed and submitted. ▪ Initial design concepts gain consensus among public and key stakeholders. ▪ Final concept designs confirmed
Timeframe	Within 6 months
Lead	Richard Burkert, Johnstown Area Heritage Association
Supporting cast	<p>Train Station / Food Hub Task Force</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Linda Thomson, JARI ▪ Ryan Kieta, Coordinator, Vision Together 2025 ▪ John Dubnansky and Jacob Zerby, City of Johnstown DCED ▪ Amy Bradley, Chamber ▪ Ethan Imhoff, County Planning/MPO ▪ Rose Lucey-Noll, CamTran ▪ Michelle Myers, Penn Highlands College ▪ PennDOT officials (potentially Urban Transit lead Andy Batson)
Needed resources and possible sources	<p>Link to application:</p> <p>https://www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/TechnicalAssistanceRequestForm.pdf</p>

Action 3.3: Approach City Planning & Community Development staff about activating vacant and underutilized spaces around the Train Station and nearby neighborhoods.

What this is and why it is important	Although the Train Station is a key tourism and commuter facility nearby several other community assets, it is immediately surrounded by acres of vacant and dimly lit spaces and underutilized parking lots. The Train Station could be reactivated with downtown, mixed-use development sparked by more vibrant Train Station use. Johnstown Planning & Community Development staff could lead an “Areawide Planning” effort to create concept designs for productive uses of these spaces, activation through pop-up and temporary uses, and longer-term development schemes backed by market feasibility and highest-and-best use studies. Could include upgraded sidewalk and walkability connections to other downtown assets, streetscape improvements, green spaces such as community parks and gardens, better lighting, and other improved uses. Could build on previous planning concepts. Keep in mind that a Food/Tourism Hub at the Johnstown Train Station will probably need 80 parking spaces.
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Areawide concept plan for reuse of the vacant spaces around Train Station created with community backing ▪ Owners of vacant properties convey willingness to reactivate/use/redevelopment spaces ▪ Plan incorporated into Johnstown Comprehensive Plan and other planning documents
Timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Johnstown Planning & Community Development Office launches effort in 2020 ▪ Areawide concept plan created by Summer 2021
Lead	John Dubnansky, Johnstown Director of Planning & Community Development
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ethan Imhoff, Cambria County Planning Commission ▪ Melissa Komar, Johnstown Redevelopment Authority ▪ Richard Burkert, JAHA ▪ Ryan Kieta, Vision Together 2025 ▪ Downtown organizations ▪ LifePoint Health ▪ Private sector landowners
Needed resources and possible sources	Utilize new EPA Brownfield Coalition Assessment to create areawide plan.

Action 3.4: Improve trail connections and accessibility, and leverage trail and outdoor recreation assets in ways that provide better access to healthy foods, enhance usage of food-related businesses, and boosts downtown and overall community placemaking and development opportunities.

What this is and why it is important	The community’s robust trail system is a major asset which helps make Johnstown a destination for tourism and recreation. Johnstown’s trail system connects key community assets within downtown and the broader community, and also connects to a broader regional network. The Cambria County Conservation & Recreation Authority (CCCRA) has taken the lead in establishing the “ <u>Urban Connectivity Plan</u> ” to better link Johnstown’s community assets with trail and sidewalk connectivity. There are, however, gaps in the trail and walkability system that will take major capital to construct and connect. Further, there has not yet been an evaluation of the walkability and transit access for Johnstown residents who need better connections to healthy foods.
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Funding plan established for filling gaps in downtown/urban trail connections, building off EADS Group cost estimations for trail system. ▪ Updated CCCRA Urban Connectivity Plan to ensure that key food assets, including projects highlighted in this LFLP Action Plan, are incorporated into connectivity plans, including for food-vulnerable populations. ▪ The plan should also consider the Johnstown Train Station as a key trailhead & hub with rental bikes, information and visitor services, vehicle parking for hikers/bikers, electronic visitor info, and associated biking/walking/tourism services.
Timeframe	Access-to-foods modifications of existing trail plans by summer 2021.
Lead	Ryan Kieta (Vision Together 2025)
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ethan Imhoff, Cambria County Planning & Transportation ▪ Lisa Rager, Cambria County Convention & Visitors Bureau ▪ Cliff Kitner, Cambria County Conservation and Recreation Authority ▪ Brad Clemenson, Conemaugh Valley Conservancy ▪ Cambria Regional Chamber, Recreation Economy Committee
Needed resources and possible sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Need resources to support implementation of EADS Group design and engineering which is underway now, which could be PennDOT contract, TAP grants, BUILD grants, and other sources. ▪ Explore Conventions and Visitors Bureau room tax resources for development of these trail facilities. ▪ Johnstown Urban Connectivity Project: http://www.cambriacconservationrecreation.com/johnstown-urban-connectivity-project/

Goal 4: Help connect food entrepreneurs to resources to establish and grow their businesses in Johnstown.

A thriving local food economy depends on a base of skilled and ambitious entrepreneurs with the appropriate infrastructure, trained workforce, and access to supply, consumer markets, and capital to launch, expand, and operate their businesses. Currently, there are some resources available to aspiring farmers and food entrepreneurs in Johnstown, including business and capital support from JARI, seasonal farmers markets, and the Field to Fork shared commercial kitchen space, but these are not yet evolved enough to significantly help incubate, launch, and grow ventures. Johnstown hopes to increase the effectiveness and utilization of existing food assets, while it develops more services and technical assistance to support food businesses to flourish in the city.

Action 4.1: Explore and initiate the existing seasonal farmers markets to expand to evening sessions which activate community spaces and provide opportunities for day workers to get healthy local foods.

What this is and why it is important	<p>While there are successful and appreciated farmers markets in Johnstown, these are seasonable and typically operate only during the day, and not evenings. These include markets in Downtown Johnstown, Richland, and Westmont. Johnstown desires to launch a pilot initiative to conduct “Night Markets,” which combine food access for the community including day workers, with music, entertainment, and in-town enjoyment of retail stores and other community facilities. These pilot “Night Markets” could rotate among various community farm markets, with the goal of determining which ones could be expanded to more regular events.</p> <p>Based on conversations with various farmers, it may be challenging to get their involvement in additional farmers markets. There are a limited number of local farmers who are already participating in farmers markets that happen almost every day of the week in various areas of the region. Farmers do not make their money off participating in farmers markets either due to costs of transporting/setup and time to man the booths. This Action should consider ways to overcome such obstacles to ensure participation of local farmers.</p>
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pilot night market held ▪ Pilots expand to multiple venues for test events ▪ Additional food vendors, food trucks, artists, entertainers, and craft/goods vendors recruited, as well as brick-and-mortar retail and entertainment venues in the market areas ▪ Pilots transform into regular Night Markets at most promising venues ▪ Ultimate metrics for success are number of events held, regularity and consistency of evening markets, foot traffic increased, and additional vendors participating.
Timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Convene and plan over the winter – December 2020 through April 2021

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Aim for May 2021 as pilot launch, with key events on Friday, June 19 (Juneteenth) and in July when vegetable produce becomes more abundant ▪ Evaluate pilot and potential expansions in winter 2021
Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Jacob Zerby, City of Johnstown, Community and Economic Development ▪ Linda Thompson, JARI ▪ Jeannine McMillian, 1889 Foundation
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Discover Downtown Johnstown Partnership (volunteer-based organization that helps promote the farmers market) ▪ Leadership and vendors of existing farmers' markets ▪ Downtown businesses, restaurant, and retail
Needed resources and possible sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Need: additional vendors (farmers and cart vendors), entertainment, permits ▪ Marketing and Promotion Plans ▪ Support from USDA's Ron Batcher on best practices for Night Markets

Action 4.2: Examine how, who, and where to best provide training and resources to farmers, youth, and entrepreneurs on hydroponics, solar energy, water filtration, greenhouse facilities, bioremediation, and other non-traditional revenue streams.

What this is and why it is important	Johnstown desires that the development of its food hubs, community gardens, and community development be sustainable, using clean energy, low-waste and other green technologies to improve community health and boost the efficiency and profitability of food economy entrepreneurs.
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The new City of Johnstown Comprehensive Plan confirms sustainable and green approaches as a key goal and focus of economic development efforts. ▪ A community planning group with key stakeholders and members of the public is formed to explore these opportunities and approaches. ▪ A guidebook and other resources on best sustainability practices is identified or developed for local entrepreneurs. ▪ A lead organization for sustainability innovations is confirmed. ▪ Existing businesses and new entrepreneurs adopt these innovative, green technologies.
Timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Planning task force formed in 1st quarter of 2021 ▪ Lead entity/organizer for these initiatives is designated by mid-2021
Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Linda Thomson, JARI to take lead for Food 21 Coordination ▪ Leanna Bird, 1889 Jefferson Center for Population Health, to coordinate with Sandyvale ▪ Michelle Myers, Penn Highlands, teaches hydroponics ▪ Jacob Zerby, Economic Development Specialist with City of Johnstown
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Criminal Justice Reentry board, recovery support community has a network. ▪ Sandyvale Community Gardens ▪ Food 21 ▪ Ron Batcher, USDA AMS

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Alan Cashaw, NAACP JB
Needed resources and possible sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Small Business Administration (SBA), already funds JARI to provide Technical Assistance to entrepreneurs. The funding is in place but JARI needs participants, partners, entrepreneurs, etc. ▪ Coop - process of growing product will sustain effort. ▪ Resources could include an ARC POWER grant

Action 4.3: Identify the regulatory, capacity, facility, marketing, and other barriers that limited the use of the Field to Fork community kitchen and eventually work to overcome these barriers and optimize existing facilities and programs to help food/ag and culinary businesses startup.

What this is and why it is important	The Field to Fork Incubator was funded as a community kitchen at Greater Johnstown Career & Technology Center (GJCTC) in 2016 but never got to a successful stage of implementation. The Johnstown community desires to revisit this asset and explore if it could still be utilized for local food system and economy. This action could explore how to better optimize use of the commercial kitchen, understand the regulatory and safety barriers to use these kitchens, and find approaches for overcoming those barriers.
Measures of success	Specific barriers to using the kitchen have been identified. These include availability of rental time, access to the facility, costs, etc. Suggested follow-up with John Augustine (Director, GJCTC) to identify specific barriers and implement ways to address them.
Timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Planning group convened in early 2021 ▪ Barriers and potential solutions identified by Summer 2021 ▪ Decision made Summer 2021 whether to re-activate Field to Fork enterprise
Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Linda Thompson, JARI, to take lead, and work closely with ▪ Michelle Myers, Penn Highlands Community College
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cheryl Fisher Kitchen Manager, Greater Johnstown Community Technical Center ▪ John Augustine, Greater Johnstown Community Technical Center ▪ Angie Berzonski, Community Foundation for the Alleghenies
Needed resources and possible sources	

Action 4.4: Explore a “Food21” Controlled Environment Agriculture (CEA) urban farm on 7-10 acres of vacant space in Johnstown as a commercial agriculture hub producing high-skills and living-wage jobs, and an abundant supply of healthy foods that can serve those in need in the greater Johnstown community.

What this is and why it is important	The mission of Food21 of Pennsylvania (based in Pittsburgh) is to expand the breadth and depth of the regional and agriculture economy through market-driven solutions and strategies. Food21 is a catalyst for developing new methods and organizing resources in
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	<p>order to achieve the mission of growing the regional food economy consistent with our stated values and ideas which include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Expanding jobs and economic opportunity in the food economy ▪ Sustainability through the applications of clean and cost-effective use of energy ▪ Broad and inclusive participation in the food economy ▪ Environmental responsibility in the production and processing of food ▪ Health and well-being through nutritional food ▪ Financial sustainability via normal market exchanges <p>A key initiative of Food21 is to use innovative “Controlled Environment Agriculture” (CEA) approaches to urban farming. CEA are facilities that use LED lights, combined heat and power, and renewable energy sources for year-round, high-efficiency food growing operations including greenhouses and aquaponic facilities. Food21 has announced that it seeks to partner with Johnstown to conduct a CEA pilot that will revitalize 7-10 acres of vacant and blighted spaces in that community with healthy, innovative CEA food systems. Success will require identification of a suitable space for the CEA project, potential infrastructure upgrades to this space, potential zoning and permitting approvals for the CEA, and job training for new employees of the enterprise. This initiative is supported by Peoples Natural Gas, a key Johnstown stakeholder. It is important that any Food21 endeavor be coordinated so that it is value added, rather than in conflict with other hydroponic greenhouses including at Sandyvale Gardens.</p>
Measures of success	<p>Land identified that is suitable for a Food21 CEA hub. A formal partnership between Johnstown and Food21 is confirmed. Food21 CEA is constructed and operations launched with new jobs for Johnstown</p>
Timeframe	<p>Land identified and confirmed by Summer of 2021 Formal partnership/MOU signed by end of 2021</p>
Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Linda Thompson, JARI ▪ Joe Butte and Glenn Ford, Food21
Supporting cast	<p>Melissa Komar, Johnstown Redevelopment Agency</p>
Needed resources and possible sources	<p>7-10 acres of suitable and available land</p>

IMPLEMENTATION AND NEXT STEPS

Following the workshop, the steering committee, community collaborators, and technical assistance team held three more calls to finalize the action plan and report. During each call, updates related to the action plan or an outcome of the workshop were shared. In some instances, new information gathered resulted in modifications to actions within the plan. Early progress and connections as a result of this process include:

- Members of the Food Security Coalition had a meeting with the Greater Pittsburgh Food Bank to understand which other communities have a local foods coordinator position and their role. The group also shared the results of a recent community food security survey of food serving agencies (n=29). The survey revealed barriers are transportation, unemployment and underemployment, and underutilization of SNAP benefits among those that qualify for the benefit. The one thing pantries participating in the survey said the only thing they don't need help with is volunteer engagement, but help is always welcome.
- Staff from the 1889 Jefferson Center for Population Health had follow-up conversations with Feeding Pennsylvania, Cambria County Backpack Project, and Pennsylvania Women's Agricultural Network (PA-WAgN) at Penn State University to discuss connecting farmers and food relief efforts.
- Since the workshop, the Chamber of Commerce, Cambria County/Penn State Extension Council/Indiana County Conservation District are looking at forming an Agricultural Committee to sit within the Chamber. One initial meeting was held plus follow up calls to explore what is needed and how the process could incorporate more stakeholders. The team is planning a farmer survey as a start to building connections between agricultural producers and business. They have established the Cambria / Indiana Farmer Assistance Fund with the purpose to provide funding for small farmers in Indiana and Cambria counties to support business plan development that focuses on sustainable farming models, including providing match funding for sustainable farming projects and the development of conservation best management practices. The Penn's Corner Charitable Trust and RC&D will serve as the 501c3 partner for providing the grants and the fund is housed at the Community Foundation for the Alleghenies. A committee of three representatives from Cambria and three from Indiana has been formed to help guide the giving priorities of the fund.
- The Vision 2025 steering committee has begun talking about a natural foods market for downtown.
- Building on its success at the farmers market, Ryan's Artisan Bread opened a store in Cambria City (old Village Street Café space that has been empty for five years). Funding from JARI and Johnstown Redevelopment Authority (via CARES funding) made this possible.
- The Eden Group was selected as the engineering firm for a project in front of the train station. This project will provide for trails around the station as part of the Iron Arts Corridor.
- The first ever "Thank a Farmer Dash" (5K) was organized to build community awareness of the Cambria / Indiana Farmer Assistance Fund. Over 60 people registered to run on the Ghost Town Trail (<https://cfalleghenies.org/thank-a-farmer/>).
- The steering committee recognized a number of future initiatives to explore for the community beyond the current action plan, including:
 - *Food retail expansion to support health.* Provide development incentives for locating new food retail in certain neighborhoods include real estate tax reductions, sales tax exemptions, and property tax deferral. Zoning incentives might include additional development rights, parking requirement reductions, and larger allowed stores in certain districts. Community benefits agreements would outline local hiring and food sourcing practices, and programs to make stores economically and culturally relevant to Detroit residents.
 - *Mobile grocery stores.* Another innovative approach to increase access to healthy food in underserved communities. Mobile grocery stores are most commonly temperature-

- controlled trucks that bring healthy, affordable food to communities with limited mobility, including low-income and aging residents.
- *Healthy corner stores.* In 2012, Los Angeles County created the Healthy Corner Store Conversion Program, a private-public partnership that works to bring nutritious and fresh foods to communities that lack it. The program is administered by NCB Capital Impact in conjunction with the California FreshWorks Fund. The fund received almost \$250 million in capital from industry, nonprofit, and government partners to finance new and upgrade existing grocery and corner stores in underserved communities. See <http://thefoodtrust.org/administrative/healthy-corner-stores-network> for more information on what might be replicated in Johnstown.
 - *Incorporate food access into city/county plans.* Jurisdictions can establish goals and policies that support healthy food retail, along with developing programs that can encourage more choices at the neighborhood scale. Policy language can focus on establishing land use policies that explicitly support healthy food access or encouraging healthy food purveyors, such as grocery stores and farmers markets, to locate near housing and transit. Some jurisdictions have developed numeric goals to achieve equitable food access. Example policy goal: Bring every resident of Johnstown within a 10-minute walk of healthy food.

APPENDICES

- Appendix A – Workshop Exercise Results
- Appendix B – Workshop Participants
- Appendix C – Slides from the Virtual Community Tour
- Appendix D – Community Data Profile
- Appendix E – Funding Resources
- Appendix F – References