# Community Action Plan for Indiana, Pennsylvania

LOCAL FOODS, LOCAL PLACES TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

December 2018


United States Environmental Protection Agency

For more information about Local Foods, Local Places visit:

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

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*Cover photo credit: Northbound Ventures*

# COMMUNITY STORY

Indiana County is located in west central Pennsylvania, just 70 miles northeast of Pittsburgh in the foothills of the Allegheny Mountains. The county was created in 1803 and the Borough of Indiana chartered shortly after in 1805 as the county seat. Indiana Borough was later formally incorporated in 1816.[1] Today the county embraces its moniker of Christmas Tree Capital of the World, and Indiana Borough enjoys the privilege of being the hometown of actor Jimmy Stewart, who starred in classic films like *It's A Wonderful Life*. There are 24 National Historic Register sites throughout the county that provide perspective on how this part of Pennsylvania came to be and how people lived.[2]

The county and the borough developed together during the nineteenth century. The economy evolved from the early trading pursuits of frontiersman and salt manufacturing to rely primarily on agriculture and timber. In the 1900s, extractive industries gained momentum with the advent of coal mining and coke production that supported a growing railroad system and steel manufacturing plants in Pittsburgh. The Pennsylvania Railroad arrived in Indiana in 1856 with the completion of a spur line to connect the region's natural resources to the rest of the state.[3,4]

In the mid-twentieth century and in line with the post-war trends of the nation, coal mining in the region began a decline, as did manufacturing by the 1980s. The impacts of job loss from previously dominant industries continue to resonate as the area loses population and the poverty rate has doubled since 2001 to its current rate of 20 percent. In 2017, the county's population was estimated at 84,953, 4.4 percent lower than the 2010 census, and income sits at $45,118, approximately 20 percent lower than the state and national averages.[5,6,7]



Figure 1 – The Indiana County Courthouse is flanked by a statue of actor Jimmy Stewart, who was born in the Borough of Indiana. Photo credit: Northbound Ventures



Figure 2 – The Jimmy Stewart Museum is located within the Indiana County Community Building at the intersection of 9th and Philadelphia Streets in downtown Indiana. Photo credit: Northbound Ventures

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[1] Borough of Indiana. https://www.indianaboro.com/about. Accessed Nov. 14, 2018.

[2] Indiana County Tourist Bureau. http://visitindianacountypa.org/about/. Accessed Nov. 14, 2018.

[3] Borough of Indiana. https://www.indianaboro.com/about. Accessed Nov. 14, 2018.

[4] Indiana County Center for Economic Operations. http://www.indianacountyceo.com/Live-Visit/History-Heritage.aspx. Accessed Nov. 14, 2018.

[5] U.S. Census Bureau. https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/indianacountypennsylvania/PST045217. Accessed Nov. 14, 2018.

[6] Data USA. https://datausa.io/profile/geo/indiana-county-pa/?compare. Accessed Nov. 14, 2018.

[7] Indiana County Statistical Profile 2006. http://www.humanservices-countyofindiana.org/uploads/hs-countyofindiana/Indiana%20County%20Profile.pdf. Accessed Nov.18, 2018.

Indiana County is a major center for energy production serving as host community to three coal-fired electric generation plants, including a "clean coal" technology facility that turns waste coal into electricity and a fourth coal-fired electric generation plant just across the border in neighboring Armstrong County. These four coal-fired power plants were constructed during the late 1960s and early 1970s to take advantage of the coal community. The "clean coal" facility was originally built in 1919 and was upgraded and converted to utilize waste coal in 2004.

The county's modern economy has diversified to replace losses from coal mining and manufacturing with other product manufacturing and services, notably education, healthcare, and pharmaceuticals. The top employers in the county today are Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP) and Indiana Regional Medical Center (IRMC), followed by state government, Diamond Drug, and Wal-Mart.[8] Given Indiana County's geographical location at the heart of the Marcellus Shale geology, its energy sector may continue to evolve and rebound too as a result of natural gas.[9]

Efforts to transform the local economy receive ongoing support from the Indiana County Center for Economic Operations (CEO), a county-wide public-private partnership serving the county dedicated to the overall growth and prosperity of the business community and quality of life initiatives. The CEO is comprised of the Indiana County Commissioners, Indiana County Chamber of Commerce, Indiana County Development Corporation, Indiana County Tourist Bureau, and IUP. Through this cooperative initiative, the CEO provides access to information, resources, and the delivery of integrated programs and services to assist businesses in their efforts to grow and expand through attraction, retention, and entrepreneurial activities. Specific services include training and education, business services, financing assistance, tax incentives, site selection in one of several business parks and multi-tenant buildings. In developing an economic and workforce development plan, the CEO identified agriculture as a key

### Local Foods, Local Places Steering Committee

- **Kay Snyder**, Co-Coordinator, Indiana Community Garden; Co-Facilitator of the Sustainable Agriculture Group, Sustainable Economic Development Task Force
- **Susan Boser,** Professor, Dept. of Sociology, Indiana University of PA; Sustainable Economic Development Task Force Steering Committee
- **Peter Broad**, President, Indiana Borough Council; Board Secretary, Food Co-op of Indiana, PA
- **Sherene Hess**, Commissioner, Indiana County; Chair, Sustainable Economic Development Task Force
- **Darlene Livingston**, Co-owner, Mahoning Creek Farm; Executive Director, PA Farm Link; President, Indiana County Farmers' Market
- **Dr. Jacqueline McGinty,** Assistant Professor, Adult and Community Education and Graduate Coordinator for the Instructional Design and Technology Program, Department of Professional Studies in Education, Indiana University of PA
- **Andrew Sandeen**, Extension Educator – Dairy, Penn State Extension

Figure 3 – Local Foods, Local Places Steering Committee Members

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[8] Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry Center for Workforce Information & Analysis. http://www.indianacountyceo.com/getattachment/Business-Industry/Top-Employers-Q4-2017-(1)/Indiana_County_Top_50.pdf.aspx;;?ext=.pdf. Accessed Nov. 14, 2018.
[9] Indiana County Center for Economic Operations. http://www.indianacountyceo.com/Business-Industry.aspx. Accessed Nov. 14, 2018.

focus of sustainable economic development for the region. In support of this vision, the County Commissioners appointed a Sustainable Economic Development Task Force to work with CEO and local non-profits.[10]

In 2017, representatives of the Sustainable Economic Development Task Force requested assistance through the Local Foods, Local Places program. Their application highlighted the community's commitment to develop sustainable agriculture in the county and a retail market in Indiana Borough to connect locally grown and raised products to consumers. The letter also described the earlier-than-expected launch of the Food Co-op of Indiana PA, a member-owned food cooperative, in 2017. As an integral part of the overall economic development and sustainable agriculture plan of the county, organizers wanted to help the Food Co-op succeed.

The expressed desires of the Sustainable Economic Development Task Force members to bring parties together, show aspiring growers how to make a living farming, increase access to food for all, and revitalize the downtown as a commercial and social center for everyone aligned closely with the goals of the Local Foods, Local Places program, which 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, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Delta Regional Authority. Indiana was one of 16 communities across the United States selected to participate in the program in 2018 out of nearly 80 applicants.

A Local Foods, Local Places steering committee was formed in Indiana to prepare for this technical assistance and is comprised of a variety of community partners (Figure 3). They were supported by a technical assistance team comprised of consultants and multiple federal agency partners (Figure 4).

## Local Foods, Local Places Technical Assistance Team

- **Melissa Kramer**, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Office of Community Revitalization
- **Jennifer Bert**, U.S . Department of Housing and Urban Development
- **Carlos Coleman**, U.S. Department of Agriculture Agricultural Marketing Service
- **Dave Coulter**, U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service
- **Karen Kuhns**, U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development
- **Rhonda Jackson**, U.S. Health and Human Services Health Resources and Services Administration
- **Jane Miller**, U.S . Department of Housing and Urban Development
- **Susan Parry,** U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service
- **Kara Pilote,** U.S. Health and Human Services Health Resources and Services Administration
- **Gary Reed**, U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development
- **Lorna Rosenberg**, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 3
- **Lynn Vozniak**, Small Business Administration
- **Holly Fowler**, Northbound Ventures (consultant)
- **Jessica Dimmick**, EPR PC (consultant)

Figure 4 – The Local Foods, Local Places Technical Assistance Team

[10] Indiana, PA Local Foods, Local Places Application

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 Indiana's goals.

## ENGAGEMENT

The technical assistance engagement process for Local Foods, Local Places has three phases, illustrated in Figure 6 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 how to maintain momentum generated during the workshop. Indiana's community workshop was held over a two-day period on October 9-10, 2018. Workshop exercise results are summarized in **Appendix A**, a participant list is provided in **Appendix B**, a workshop photo album is provided in **Appendix C**, a data profile in **Appendix D**, funding resources in **Appendix E,** and general references in **Appendix F**.
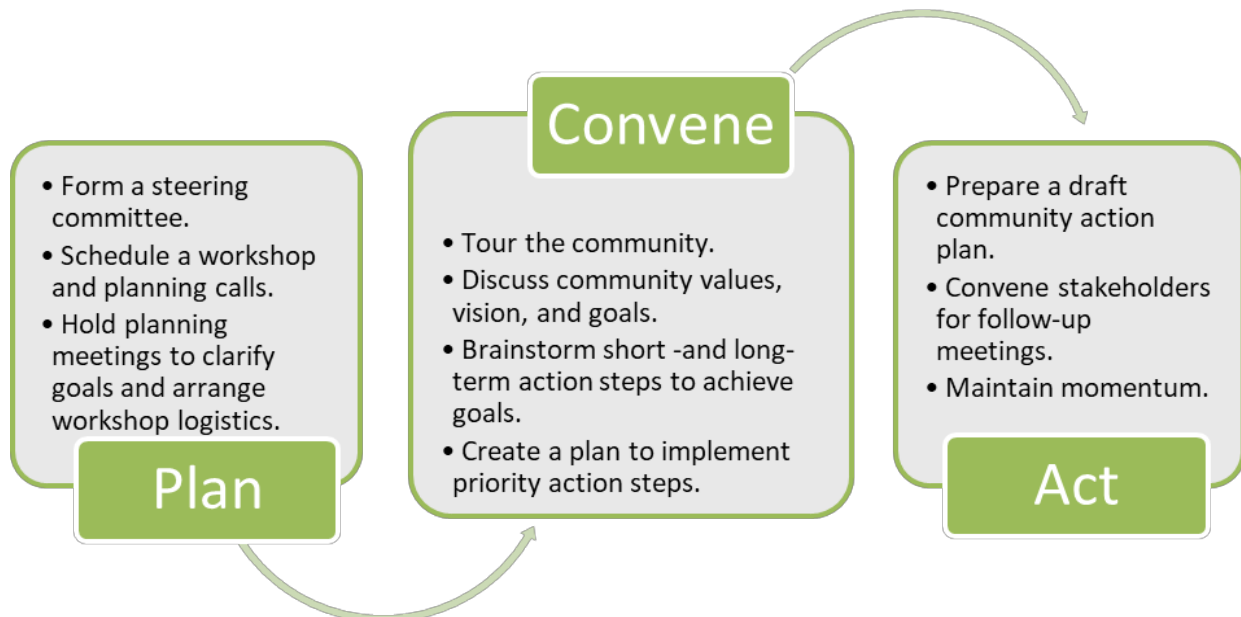
### Plan
- Form a steering committee.
- Schedule a workshop and planning calls.
- Hold planning meetings to clarify goals and arrange workshop logistics.

### Convene
- Tour the community.
- Discuss community values, vision, and goals.
- Brainstorm short -and long-term action steps to achieve goals.
- Create a plan to implement priority action steps.

### Act
- Prepare a draft community action plan.
- Convene stakeholders for follow-up meetings.
- Maintain momentum.

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

## COMMUNITY TOUR

In advance of the first community session on October 9th, the local Steering Committee designed and led a walking tour of downtown Indiana for federal partners and members of the technical assistance team to experience recent municipal infrastructure improvement projects and visit the food retail environment of Indiana Borough including the weekend farmers market host site. Along the way, the group also saw and learned from resident experts about recreational paths, parks, schools, and historic buildings. The group also took vans to visit the county's primary community garden and a local farm in Homer City. En route, participants saw principal grocery retailers and the anchor institutions of Indiana Regional Medical Center (IRMC) and Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP).

The tour started from family-owned Josephine's Pizzeria and Enoteca at the western end of Philadelphia Street, the main street of Indiana Borough's downtown. The restaurant offers externships to IUP Culinary Institute students as part of its contribution to the local food system.

The group walked up Philadelphia Street passing key landmarks such as the Indiana County Courthouse and Indiana County Community Building, which houses the Jimmy Stewart Museum and public library. The museum focused on Indiana's hometown son is an important tourist attraction. A statue of the actor welcomes both passersby and those with official business at the courthouse, while his voice directs pedestrians at all crosswalks in downtown.

The group stopped at 8th Street and Church Street, a block away from downtown's main thoroughfare, where the Indiana County Farmers Markets holds an outdoor seasonal market on Saturdays from 9:00am to noon in the S&T Bank parking lot. A Wednesday market is held outside of downtown in the parking lot of the Kovalchick Complex, which is perceived to be a less popular location with consumers. The market started accepting Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) in its 2017 season, which helps low-income individuals and families access fresh foods. Farmer market vendors and customers also support the local food bank with donations to its Harvest for the Hungry.

About 25 vendors sell produce, meat, baked goods, dairy, honey, maple syrup, personal care products, and other items at the market to IUP staff and local residents, though the market does not draw many IUP students yet. The farmers market is attracting younger farmers though, which is in part enabled by Indiana County's unique and large supply of available and affordable land. According to market organizers, the vendors would like to see additional signage allowed to publicize market events and draw more pedestrian traffic from Philadelphia Street, and a public restroom would benefit all.

The tour proceeded across Philadelphia Street to the corner of 7th Street and IRMC Park, where the Food Co-op of Indiana PA until October 31, 2018 leased a space in the former Gatti Pharmacy owned by David and Kay Smith.



Figure 6 – The community tour started at Josephine's Pizzeria and Enoteca, a third-generation family business that supports local agriculture. Photo credit: Northbound Ventures



Figure 7 – The Borough of Indiana has completed numerous streetscape upgrades in recent years. Photo credit: Northbound Ventures



Figure 8 – A seasonal outdoor farmers market is held in a downtown Indiana parking lot on Saturdays. Photo credit: Northbound Ventures

Figure 9 – Eric Barker, Chair of the Food Co-op of Indiana PA, shares the origin and evolution of the market during the community tour. Photo credit: Northbound Ventures



Figure 10 – The Indiana Community Garden is currently one of a kind in Indiana. Photo credit: Northbound Ventures



Figure 11 – Nature Works in Homer City is a small, diversified farm and nursery business helping to grow the local food system in Indiana County. Photo credit: Northbound Ventures

The co-op was conceived in 2015 and not yet ready for launch in August 2017 when the Smiths offered the Gatti space to co-op organizers at a nominal rent. The co-op board decided to open, but lack of working capital made it difficult to stock the shelves, hire staff, and pay vendors in a timely manner. Eric Barker, Board Chair of the Food Co-op of Indiana PA, welcomed the Local Foods, Local Places visiting group to the market and explained a recent decision to temporarily suspend operations and recalibrate financial and business planning. This includes considering alternative models such as a non-permanent retail location similar to Friends & Farmers in State College, Pennsylvania. Regardless of the ultimate operational plan, future activities of the co-op will likely include obtaining 501(c)3 nonprofit status, a membership drive, fundraising campaign, and efforts to rebuild support for the project.

From the Food Co-op, the group continued on foot to Horace Mann Elementary School and finally Memorial Park, a county park punctuated by WalkWorks signs encouraging people to get moving with others. The walk provided the opportunity to see downtown streetscape renovations completed two years ago between 10th and 5th streets. Bricked sidewalks, energy-efficient lighting, and tree plantings are some of the upgrades made to the municipality's infrastructure. The construction did impact some local businesses though, and a number of retail spaces are vacant awaiting new tenants. At the Horace Mann Elementary School, part of the Indiana Area School District, the group paused to discuss the advantages of students being able to walk to school. Local stakeholders would like to see more greenery and shade added to the school grounds and ideally some gardens to complement students' classroom learning.

From the school and park, the group continued by car to briefly visit the Indiana Community Garden in privately owned Mack Pack. The garden was created in 2012 and has 24 plots available to rent for $30 a year. Volunteers share the harvest from 12 larger community plots and many in-ground growing areas with local food banks and other members of the community. The garden sponsors a youth garden program, hosts or partners with numerous educational and community events, and provides numerous opportunities for service learning. Since the garden relies on volunteers, its recognition as a valuable community asset is important to attracting interested parties to help sponsor and maintain it for the future.

The final destination of the tour was Nature Works, a small diversified farm and nursery located in Homer City, operated by a young farmer couple – Bob and Cassandra Madden. Both veterans of Pittsburgh Grows, the couple bought their current property three years ago and have steadily been managing the existing nursery business while introducing sustainable and organic growing practices to their greenhouse and 15 acres. Together with another farm, they run a community supported agriculture (CSA) program for 15 families, featuring a large variety of heirloom produce and eggs from their 70-80 chickens. They also sell direct from their own farm stand and participate in the Indiana County Farmers Market. They are raising miniature goats and a grazing pig and could expand into aquaponics in the future. They are representative of the hard work required to make a living in agriculture in the region, but also of the value of working together with fellow farmers and other community partners.

**Appendix C** has many more photos and additional details of the community tour.

## VISION AND VALUES – DAY ONE

Almost forty residents and community stakeholders attended the first public session of the workshop on the evening of October 9th. Notably, a number of students from IUP's Student Association of Nutrition and Dietetics (SAND) were on hand to support the event with locally produced refreshments and their valuable youth perspective.

Sherene Hess, Indiana County Commissioner, and Kay Snyder, representing the Sustainable Economic Development Task Force Sustainable Agriculture Sub-committee, welcomed attendees and spoke about the history of the project and the local Steering Committee's objective in bringing the community together around the Local Foods, Local Places program. Both recognized the opportunity to scale up farming and food enterprises as positive economic, social, and environmental drivers of Indiana's economy.

After initial remarks, the technical assistance team introduced the Local Foods, Local Places program with a short presentation. The team highlighted the elements and benefits of a local food system, as well as the importance of incorporating 'equity' as a measure of the system's success. Additionally, the team shared demographic and regional data that demonstrated useful baseline measurements of food access, health, and economic well-being. More publicly available data about Indiana can be found in **Appendix D.**

### I believe that Indiana...

- Is a great place to raise a family.
- Has great potential.
- Cares about its community members.
- Is a great walkable little town.
- Has great downtown architecture.
- Supports agriculture and farmers.
- Has beautiful green space.
- Could do a better job of getting fresh fruits and vegetables into the schools.
- Can move much closer to its goals of increasing fresh food access.
- Will be part of the food shed and a model for other counties.
- Is an iconic American community that thrives because of the people that live here.

Figure 12 – In a group exercise designed to capture the community's vision and values, participants were asked to complete the statement "I believe that Indiana..."

The primary purpose of the community meeting was to hear from residents and other stakeholders about their vision for increasing access to locally grown food and ideas about the potential growth of sustainable agriculture as an industry in Indiana County. The technical assistance team led attendees through a group exercise called "This I believe...", designed to bring up core values of the community (Figures 12 and 13).

A second group exercise was conducted as a plenary discussion to explore what currently is working well in Indiana County and Indiana Borough and what ideas from other places might be best practices for the community to consider. Participants identified a need for more support for individual producers to lower food prices, more gardens, more outreach to the community, and more opportunities to sell local produce to grocery stores, restaurants, and institutions.

The comprehensive results from all of the group exercises are available in **Appendix A**.

## ACTION PLANNING - DAY TWO

### *Case Studies*

The second day of the workshop began with examples of strategies used by other communities to advance their food system and place-making initiatives. Examples of food co-operatives, food hubs, and alternative retail models for promoting local food sales attempted to inspire a new look at potential food business models and available space and retail partners in Indiana. Other case studies focused on farmer incubator programs like the highly successful Intervale Center in Burlington, Vermont, and community gardener trainings such as the Gardener Coordinator Institute offered by Mill City Grows in Lowell, Massachusetts. Around each of these case studies there were plenary discussions about lessons learned and takeaways for if and how similar programs could help Indiana advance its goals.

### *Mapping Exercises*

Next on Day 2, workshop participants engaged in one of two group mapping exercises. The first aimed to identify walk/bike routes surrounding downtown Indiana and key

### This I believe about local food in Indiana...

- It is really good! More people should know about it.
- It is plentiful and will be more plentiful in the future.
- More people need to be educated about its benefits.
- It remains an underappreciated asset.
- There are many programs that could benefit local food entrepreneurs.
- There are pockets of food insecurity that need to be addressed.
- There is lots of room to grow food.
- Producers may not be adequately compensated.

Figure 13 – Workshop participants completed the statement "This I believe about local foods in Indiana..." The summary of responses is above.



Figure 14 – Participants at the Indiana Local Foods, Local Places workshop connected the dots between different stakeholders in their local food system via a group mapping exercise.

assets that might encourage people to visit or explore the area or inhibit their ability to do so as a pedestrian. This exercise was undertaken with the understanding that current master planning anticipates expansion and completion of a rail trail leading directly into downtown. Among the points discussed were the preservation of cross walks following road and streetlight construction and addition of pathways between student housing centers and downtown.

In another group, participants huddled around a generic food system diagram and identified partnerships and programs that currently exist in support of the local food system and others that the community would like to see reinvigorated or formed.

The exercise highlighted potential areas for improvement between suppliers and buyers and sources of excess food and the support agencies equipped to deliver it to those in the community at risk for food insecurity. The results of both activities are captured in **Appendix A**.

# ACTION PLAN

## *Action Plan Process*

The action planning process during the workshop consisted of a few phases of work.  First there was a brainstorming session, where participants were asked to write down potential actions to help advance one or more goals. The next phase included a dot voting exercise where participants were given a set number of dots and were asked to vote on which actions either were most important or needed immediate attention. In the third phase, small working groups assessed the prioritization voting and fleshed out the details of the top 2-5 actions for each goal, such as importance, timeframe, lead role, etc. In the final phase, each small working group reported back its progress and shared any challenges encountered.  The goals and supporting actions listed below were refined on three post workshop calls by the local steering committee members with input from other community contributors. The tables that follow provide additional detail for each action.



Figure 15 – Participants at the Indiana Local Foods, Local Places workshop discuss priority actions for one of the community's goal and what efforts could advance each.



Figure 16 – At the end of the workshop, participants reconvene from smaller goal groups to report back on the priority actions identified and strategies for how to move forward over the next 12-24 months.

## *Action Plan*

- Goal 1 – Support increased access, resource awareness, and education through collaborative relationships.
  - *Action 1.1* – Grant credit to Master Gardeners for work at the Indiana Community Garden and elsewhere that help educate the community about gardening.
  - *Action 1.2* – Establish a communication and logistics process for local farms to share surplus crops with food pantries, soup kitchens, homeless shelters, and personal care homes serving Indiana.
  - *Action 1.3* – Revitalize and expand youth access to edible gardens and nutrition education.
  - *Action 1.4*—Establish plan for digital strategies to leverage technology to facilitate access, outreach, awareness, and education.
- Goal 2 – Expand community outlets for local producers and their potential for positive impact on Indiana County.
  - *Action 2.1* – Determine interest of institutional buyers to source locally raised and produced foods and create a list of vendor requirements. Develop farmer tool box containing resources to meet institutional selling requirements.
  - *Action 2.2* – Establish new sales locations for producer direct marketing opportunities.
  - *Action 2.3* – Facilitate conversation between interested farmers and food entrepreneurs about collaborative opportunities.
  - *Action 2.4* – Identify requirements for value-added production and provide to farmers. Identify potential existing processing facilities (certified kitchens) and share with farmers to expand the number of producers selling value-added products.
- Goal 3 – Help aspiring and current entrepreneurs to develop sustainable agricultural or food-related enterprises.
  - *Action 3.1* – Recruit Indiana residents who are potential beginner farmers/food entrepreneurs to participate in a workshop developed specifically for them.
  - *Action 3.2* – Advertise federal and state funding programs appropriate for food entrepreneurs at events and venues where they would be.
  - *Action 3.3* – Create a clearinghouse of funding resources available for agriculture-related businesses.
- Goal 4 – Improve walkability and connectivity from surrounding neighborhoods to downtown Indiana.
  - *Action 4.1* – Increase the number of bike racks in downtown Indiana.
  - *Action 4.2* – Conduct a sidewalk condition assessment of downtown Indiana and make necessary upgrades.
  - *Action 4.3* – Increase signage for walkability to downtown with QR codes or other digital technologies.
  - *Action 4.4* – Ensure access to downtown area by people in areas surrounding Indiana who have limited transportation options.
- Goal 5 – Increase the recognition and utilization of downtown Indiana as an asset for the community.
  - *Action 5.1* – Develop a public relations and marketing plan to address parking misconceptions and improve public perception.
  - *Action 5.2* – Collaborate with Indiana County Farmers' Market to explore Indiana Regional Medical Center (IRMC) Park and other potential locations as a mid-week location for the market.
  - *Action 5.3* – Incorporate local food and agriculture into the annual Northern Appalachian Folk Festival, an annual event in downtown Indiana.

## Goal 1: Support increased food access, resource awareness, and education through collaborative relationships.

Food access is a concern for Indiana County as it works to mitigate a rising poverty rate. In preparation for the workshop, steering committee members completed a community self-assessment. The experience of identifying progress in a number of areas related to food and place-based initiatives revealed that there are a lot of organizations and individuals conducting important work to preserve and expand food access, but they are not always connected and coordinated. During the workshop, participants elevated potential actions in support of this goal aimed at increasing individuals' capacity to grow food, connecting surplus farm product with service agencies, and expanding garden-based education for youth.

| Action 1.1: Grant credit to Master Gardeners for work at the Indiana Community Garden and elsewhere that help educate the community about gardening. | |
|---|---|
| **What this is and why it is important** | The Penn State Master Gardener Program is a program of Penn State Extension administered at the county level. Master Gardener trainees are required to participate in a minimum of forty hours of basic training, pass a final exam, and fulfill 50 hours of volunteer service as part of their certification. Volunteer time at the Indiana Community Garden that had an educational purpose or teaching component previously qualified toward these program requirements, but is no longer recognized by Penn State Extension. Community gardens rely on a volunteer base and serve as a recruitment tool for the Master Gardener Program. Reestablishing this connection can help to build the community's capacity and knowledge for growing, while serving the needs of both the community garden and master gardeners. Successful collaboration and capacity building will support the expansion of gardens and therefore more opportunities for people to grow food for individual consumption and/or donation. |
| **Measures of success** | • Approach Penn State Cooperative Extension to clarify policies and procedures regarding qualified volunteer time<br>• Request Penn State Cooperative Extension Indiana County grant credit to Master Gardeners when their activities at the Indiana Community Garden or elsewhere help educate the community about gardening<br>• Master Gardeners receive credit for activities with an educational purpose or teaching component at the Indiana Community Garden and elsewhere |
| **Timeframe** | 0-6 months |
| **Lead** | Kay Snyder, Sustainable Economic Development Task Force Steering Committee and Co-Coordinator, Indiana County Community Garden |

## Action 1.1: Grant credit to Master Gardeners for work at the Indiana Community Garden and elsewhere that help educate the community about gardening.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Supporting cast** | • Diana Kerr, Indiana County Master Gardener Program Coordinator, Penn State Cooperative Extension<br>• Master Gardeners who want to educate the community about growing food e.g., Cindy Hatcher, Tom Nowak, Lisa McCann, Vicki Lesnet, Colleen Wakefield<br>• Chloe Drew, Youth Garden Coordinator, Indiana Community Garden<br>• Master Gardener trainees and volunteers<br>• Community gardeners<br>• Dr. Melissa Swauger, Seedling Project (provides seeds, seedlings, growing medium, and instructions to interested food pantry clients who want to grow food at home)<br>• George Gettis, Spirit Life staff (wants clients to learn about gardening by providing help under supervision at the Indiana Community Garden)<br>• Indiana County Workshop staff (want clients to learn about growing food) |
| **Costs and/or resources needed** | • Time<br>• Information about the activities in which Master Gardeners would be involved for Penn State Extension |
| **Possible funding sources** | N/A |

## Action 1.2: Establish a communication and logistics process for local farms to share surplus crops with food pantries, soup kitchens, homeless shelters, and personal care homes serving Indiana.

| | |
|---|---|
| **What this is and why it is important** | Occasionally during each peak harvest season, farmers may have more fresh produce than they can store or sell. Rather than till or compost excess supply, organizations serving food pantries, soup kitchens, shelters, and homebound persons could accept this product for incorporation in their food services. This would help provide healthy, fresh food for local service agencies and promote environmental best practices. |
| **Measures of success** | • Number of farmers donating surplus product<br>• Number of beneficiaries<br>• Pounds of fresh, local food donated or diverted |
| **Timeframe** | Process established before April 2019 |
| **Lead** | Aimee Kemp, Food Bank Coordinator, Indiana County Community Action Program |

| Action 1.2: Establish a communication and logistics process for local farms to share surplus crops with food pantries, soup kitchens, homeless shelters, and personal care homes serving Indiana. | |
|---|---|
| Supporting cast | • Indiana County Community Action Program (currently operates 17 food pantries in the county, including two in Indiana; they can provide names and locations)<br>• Kathy Gaylor, Zion Community Food Bank, Indiana Borough<br>• Chevy Chase Community Center (soup kitchens in Indiana and Blairsville)<br>• Pathway Homeless Shelter, Black Lick<br>• Cindy Briggs, Dixonville Wesleyan Methodist Church Community Kitchen<br>• Soup for Souls, sponsored by New Life Community Church<br>• Farmers<br>• Penn's Corner Farm Alliance<br>• Tom Beresnyak, Communications Specialist, Penn State Cooperative Extension, Indiana County<br>• Kay Snyder, Co-Facilitator, Sustainable Ag Group of the Sustainable Economic Development Task Force and Co-Coordinator, Indiana Community Garden<br>• Scott Marshall, Marshall Heritage Farm<br>• Volunteers to assist with transport and gleaning |
| Costs and/or resources needed | • Equipment purchase to meet food safety requirements for donated product<br>• Volunteer or paid staff time<br>• Vehicle to transport food<br>• Storage/refrigeration space (available at Indiana County Community Action Program)<br>• Logistical, technical support to connect available produce when and where needed at food banks, soup kitchens, etc.<br>• Examples from other communities and organizational partnerships |
| Possible funding sources | Funding needs for equipment, storage or transport of donated product may be identified in the future as needed. |

| Action 1.3: Revitalize and expand youth access to edible gardens and nutrition education. | |
|---|---|
| What this is and why it is important | Currently there are only two raised bed gardens in Indiana in active use that are geared toward youth. One bed is located at the Indiana Community Garden and is used in the garden's Youth Garden Program, and the other beds are located at East Pike Elementary School and are used by some teachers with their classrooms. More raised garden beds at schools or other places where youth-focused programming occurs would be beneficial to Indiana's young people. Gardens can be a tool to help cultivate healthy behaviors, build appreciation for food inputs, and support learning objectives across all subjects. |
| Measures of success | • Number of youth engaged<br>• Number of raised beds revitalized or established<br>• Hours of garden programming targeting youth<br>• School gardens integrated into curriculum<br>• Youth field trips to the Indiana County Community Garden at Mack Park |

| Action 1.3: Revitalize and expand youth access to edible gardens and nutrition education. | |
|---|---|
| **Timeframe** | • 6-10 months: YMCA raised bed is reactivated<br>• 6-10 months: At least one additional bed is built, or one field trip to the Indiana Community Garden at Mack Park is organized |
| **Lead** | • Chloe Drew, Youth Garden Coordinator, Indiana Community Garden |
| **Supporting cast** | • Gina Lehman, Executive Director, Adagio Health<br>• Shawn Sebring, Senior Program Director, Indiana County YMCA<br>• Stacie Hritz, 4-H/Youth Development Coordinator, Penn State Extension<br>• Indiana Area School District administrative offices<br>• School principals<br>• County-wide schools<br>• Community gardens and gardeners<br>• Indiana Community Garden Youth Garden Program<br>• Penn State Extension Indiana County Master Gardeners<br>• Edible Schoolyard Pittsburgh (curriculum lesson plans)<br>• Future Farmers of America |
| **Costs and/or resources needed** | • Materials for raised beds<br>• Garden tools and supplies (plants, seeds, etc.), storage box or shed<br>• Program coordination<br>• Garden-based learning tools<br>• Garden volunteers |
| **Possible funding sources** | • Quota International (Gina Lehman, Member, Indiana Chapter)<br>• Indiana Rotary Club<br>• Junior Women's Civic Club<br>• Indiana County Endowment<br>• USDA Farm to School Grant<br>• Kids Gardening 2019 Youth Garden Grant<br>• Donations<br>• Corporate sponsorships |

| Action 1.4: Establish a plan for digital strategies to leverage technology to facilitate access, outreach, awareness, and education. | |
|---|---|
| **What this is and why it is important** | It is important to consider technology and digital strategies when developing outreach, information, and education plans for this project. Each goal and action in the plan may include communication and outreach that can be facilitated through digital media outlets. |
| **Measures of success** | Communication plan established to include social media, internet, and other digital outreach strategies to promote access, outreach, awareness and education. |
| **Timeframe** | • 0-6 months: initial planning<br>• 6-12 months: implementation |

| Action 1.4: Establish a plan for digital strategies to leverage technology to facilitate access, outreach, awareness, and education. | |
|---|---|
| Lead | Jacqueline McGinty, Indiana University of PA, Professional Studies in Education Department |
| Supporting cast | • Professional Studies in Education graduate students<br>• Indiana County Chamber of Commerce<br>• Indiana Borough<br>• Downtown Indiana<br>• Indiana County Office of Planning and Development<br>• Indiana County Center for Economic Operations |
| Costs and/or resources needed | • Technology resources<br>• Professional expertise |
| Possible funding sources | Grants as available |

Additional Goal 1 Actions:

− Bring farmers to schools to increase farm education to students
− Educate people about how food grows and seasonality
− Organize an educational farm to increase public and community knowledge about the economics of agriculture and food

## Goal 2: Expand community outlets for local food producers and their potential for positive impact on Indiana County.

Currently, most local food consumed in Indiana County is sold directly to consumers by farmers at the Indiana County Farmers Market or scattered farm stands, although some farmers also have local restaurants as clients. When the Downtown Indiana Food Co-op takes a pause starting in November 2018, there will be no retail option open daily to buy fresh produce within walking distance to downtown Indiana. Expanding the number of retail or institutional outlets for locally grown food would mean more food grown in Indiana is consumed in Indiana. Contracts with new partners would extend local food access to new, more diverse audiences and help farmers even out seasonal fluctuations in sales.

| Action 2.1: Determine interest of institutional buyers to source locally raised and produced foods and create a list of vendor requirements. Develop farmer tool box containing resources to meet institutional selling requirements. | |
|---|---|
| **What this is and why it is important** | Institutional food service providers such as schools, universities hospitals, and long-term care facilities purchase large volumes of food and can be important clients for local farmers. However, contract requirements of such clients can be challenging for traditional direct-to-consumer, small scale farms. Completing the first steps determining requirements and learning how to meet them takes time local farmers do not have. A representative will ask institutional food service representatives and distributors their vendor requirements and product specifications. A farmer tool box will be created with resources for farmers to use to meet the requirements (inspectors, regulation location links, etc.). The information will be shared with farmers to determine if the institutional markets are a fit for their operations. |
| **Measures of success** | • Representation from diverse institutions (e.g., schools, higher education, health care).<br>• Number of institutions interested in sharing their requirements and interested in working with farmers.<br>• Number of local producers that seek to meet the requirements.<br>• Number of producers interested in a meet and greet event with institutional buyers.<br>• Number of new pilot activities or partnerships started |
| **Timeframe** | Fall 2019 - 2020 |
| **Lead** | Darlene Livingston, Director, PA Farm Link / Co-owner, Mahoning Creek Farm / President, Indiana County Farmers' Market |
| **Supporting cast** | • Patrick Andrews, Coordinator, Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture (PA Farm-to-School)<br>• Farmers<br>• Food service management companies (e.g., Chartwells, Aramark)<br>• Institutional dining services leads (e.g., Director of Dining Services at Indiana University of Pennsylvania)<br>• Indiana Regional Medical Center<br>• Regional food distribution representatives (e.g., Sysco)<br>• Indiana Chamber of Commerce<br>• Indiana County Community Action Program<br>• Indiana University of Pennsylvania (interns in relevant departments) |
| **Costs and/or resources needed** | • List of potential institutions with contact information<br>• Person to gather information, develop institutional buying spreadsheet, and farmer toolbox |
| **Possible funding sources** | USDA Farm to School Grant (planning grant for feasibility study) |

| Action 2.2: Establish new sales locations for producer direct marketing opportunities. | |
|---|---|
| What this is and why it is important | Some farmers' direct-to-consumer sales are limited to one sales opportunity per week. Develop more sales channels open to local food producers to build year-round revenue streams. |
| Measures of success | • Number of additional locations featuring locally produced food<br>• Number of growers selling at new locations<br>• Number of customers at new locations<br>• Amount of sales at new locations |
| Timeframe | Spring 2019 |
| Lead | • Linda Mitchell, Executive Director, Downtown Indiana<br>• President, Indiana County Chamber of Commerce |
| Supporting cast | • Indiana County Sustainable Economic Development Task Force Steering Committee<br>• Indiana Borough<br>• Indiana University of Pennsylvania (survey)<br>• Denise Liggett, Director, Indiana County Tourism Bureau<br>• Board, Food Co-op of Indiana PA |
| Costs and/or resources needed | • Advertising and recruitment of retailers<br>• Signage |
| Possible funding sources | • USDA Farmers Market Promotion Program Grant<br>• USDA Local Foods Promotion Program Grant<br>• Wallace Center at Winrock International Food and Farm Communications Fund Core Grants Program |

| Action 2.3:. Facilitate conversation between interested farmers and food entrepreneurs about collaborative opportunities. | |
|---|---|
| What this is and why it is important | Different organizations convene sub-sets of Indiana County's farmers and food entrepreneurs on various occasions for workshops or other events to exchange experience, knowledge, and ideas. A conversation between all interested parties regarding potential cooperative opportunities may be beneficial and helpful to farmers seeking direct markets. The conversation would be beneficial to relationship and trust building, and existing groups can be encouraged to expand listening and inclusive participation. |
| Measures of success | • Meeting facilitated to discuss potential cooperative opportunities.<br>• Farmers, food entrepreneurs and organization members all hear, learn and understand others point of view. |
| Timeframe | 0 – 6 months |
| Lead | Susan Boser, IUP Sociology Department and Indiana County Sustainable Economic Development Task Force |

| Action 2.3:. Facilitate conversation between interested farmers and food entrepreneurs about collaborative opportunities. | |
|---|---|
| Supporting cast | • Stanley Chepaitis, Uncle Henry's Garden<br>• Chloe Drew, Pennsylvania Women's Agricultural Network (PA-WAgN)<br>• Farmers<br>• Darlene Livingston, President, Indiana County Farmers' Market; Co-owner, Mahoning Creek Farm; Director, PA Farm Link<br>• Indiana County Farmers' Market staff<br>• Indiana, PA Food Co-op Board |
| Costs and/or resources needed | • Time<br>• Individuals or organizations offering space for meetings |
| Possible funding sources | N/A |

| Action 2.4: Identify requirements for value-added production and provide to farmers. Identify potential existing processing facilities (certified kitchens) and share with farmers to expand the number of producers selling value-added products. | |
|---|---|
| What this is and why it is important | There is a demand for local value-added products, which is an opportunity to utilize imperfect crops and commodities. Producers require training and information to evaluate their business interest and potential to scale up value-added processing. |
| Measures of success | • Provide list of requirements to farmers for creating value-added products<br>• List of available certified kitchen facilities<br>• Number of producers selling value-added products downtown |
| Timeframe | • Develop list of requirements and professional contacts to assist with meeting regulations: 0-6 months<br>• Identify available facilities for use:  6-8 months<br>• Develop list of available facilities: 6-12 months |
| Lead | Darlene Livingston, Director, PA Farm Link / Co-owner, Mahoning Creek Farm / President, Indiana County Farmers' Market |
| Supporting cast | PA Farm Link staff |
| Costs and/or resources needed | • Time<br>• Someone familiar with local Indiana facilities<br>• Insurance requirements for owners to rent certified kitchen for outside production |
| Possible funding sources | • Kiva Loan<br>• USDA Value-added Producer Grant |

Additional Goal 2 Actions:

− Create a master food action plan.
− Create a mobile food truck (pantry) going to aging services and subsidized housing and other vulnerable populations locations on a regular basis.

- Use elementary schools as places of distribution for local foods.
- Survey local food businesses to find out what they can source locally.
- Have food businesses identify locally sourced items on menus to market producers' products.
- Find out from producers if they can grow what food businesses want to be locally sourced.
- Have the Indiana Food Co-op establish supplier relationships with farmers and local institutions (schools and hospitals) and act as an intermediary coordinator.
- Create a local farms-to-institutional kitchen program with the Indiana Regional Medical Center (include education for patients on cooking with local produce).
- Create a farm-to-school program to supply food for afterschool programs.

## Goal 3: Help aspiring and current entrepreneurs to develop sustainable agricultural or food-related enterprises.

Indiana wants to encourage its established and aspiring farmers to grow their operations sustainably and assist existing and new food artisans to utilize more locally grown, raised or harvested product. As launching and building businesses requires resources and skills, efforts can be made to help growing businesses connect with available resources. To accomplish this, it's necessary to identify what businesses need, what financial and technical assistance is available that targets food and agricultural enterprises, and the best methods to communicate opportunities.

| Action 3.1: Recruit Indiana residents who are potential beginner farmers/food entrepreneurs to participate in a workshop developed specifically for them. | |
|---|---|
| What this is and why it is important | There is a general lack of awareness of available, affordable programs and resources for beginning farmers/food entrepreneurs. This action will raise awareness of learning opportunities, cost share programs, loan programs, and grants. The event will include breakouts or roundtable sessions where agencies introduce available resources. Participants will leave with a wide variety of new available resources. |
| Measures of success | • Number of people who participate<br>• Number of new businesses that are launched<br>• Number of new resources farm/food businesses will utilize<br>• Growth of existing food businesses |
| Timeframe | • Convene the target audience by the first quarter of 2019<br>• Planning and coordination before the end of 2018 |
| Lead | • Darlene Livingston, Director, PA Farm Link / Co-owner, Mahoning Creek Farm / President, Indiana County Farmers' Market<br>• Season Petrovich, Cultures LLC<br>• Tony Palamone, Small Business Development Center, Indiana University of PA |

**Action 3.1: Recruit Indiana residents who are potential beginner farmers/food entrepreneurs to participate in a workshop developed specifically for them.**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Supporting cast** | • Lynn Vozniak, U.S. Small Business Administration<br>• David Coulter, U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Services<br>• Karen Kuhns, U.S Department of Agriculture Rural Development<br>• Beth Futrick, Agriculture Ombudsman<br>• Indiana County Conservation District<br>• Andrew Sandeen, Penn State Extension Indiana County<br>• Selina Pedi, Pennsylvania's Women's Agricultural Network<br>• Local Foods, Local Places Steering Committee<br>• Westmoreland Community College |
| **Costs and/or resources needed** | • Time<br>• Meeting costs (facility, advertising)<br>• United States Department of Agriculture Farm Services Agency email blast<br>• WAgN, PASA, Troops to Tractors, NYFC, PA Farm Link e-news blast, Facebook posts, list serves<br>• Pro bono meeting room from someone involved in the meeting |
| **Possible funding sources** | PA Farm Link has a small amount of potential funding |

**Action 3.2: Advertise federal and state funding programs appropriate for food entrepreneurs at events and venues where they would be.**

| | |
|---|---|
| **What this is and why it is important** | Any new business benefits from adequate start-up support, including financial funding. However, entrepreneurs often lack sufficient time to research available resources and opportunity windows to apply for funding may be narrow and change from year to year. |
| **Measures of success** | Number of people reached through different advertising mechanisms |
| **Timeframe** | 12 months (because Action 3.1 and 3.2 must be completed first) |
| **Lead** | • Darlene Livingston, Director, PA Farm Link / Co-owner, Mahoning Creek Farm / President, Indiana County Farmers' Market<br>• Season Petrovich, Founder, Cultures, LLC |
| **Supporting cast** | • Selina Pedi, Pennsylvania's Women's Agricultural Network<br>• U.S. Small Business Administration<br>• U.S. Department of Agriculture<br>• Penn State Cooperative Extension<br>• Local Foods, Local Places Steering Committee<br>• Downtown Indiana and agricultural event organizers (e.g., farmers markets, produce auctions, livestock auctions)<br>• Indiana County Office of Planning and Development<br>• Indiana County Sustainable Economic Development Task Force |

| Action 3.2: Advertise federal and state funding programs appropriate for food entrepreneurs at events and venues where they would be. | |
| --- | --- |
| **Costs and/or resources needed** | <ul><li>Time</li><li>Money for advertising (Use news releases, Facebook, listservs, e-news blasts, IUP's Small Business Development Center, college advisors)</li><li>Email distribution list of food entrepreneurs (Don't know of one?)</li></ul> |
| **Possible funding sources** | Indiana County Center for Economic Operations |

| Action 3.3: Create a clearinghouse of funding resources available for agriculture-related businesses. | |
| --- | --- |
| **What this is and why it is important** | The community needs to know what already exists, who can access opportunities and how. |
| **Measures of success** | <ul><li>Number of resources compiled</li><li>Clearinghouse exists</li><li>Number of people who access the clearinghouse</li></ul> |
| **Timeframe** | 6 – 12 months |
| **Lead** | Darlene Livingston, Director, PA Farm Link / Co-owner, Mahoning Creek Farm / President, Indiana County Farmers' Market (can develop a list of opportunities; fits with 3.1 and 3.2) |
| **Supporting cast** | <ul><li>Indiana County Sustainable Economic Development Task Force Steering Committee</li><li>Indiana County Office of Planning and Development</li><li>PA Farm Link</li><li>Small Business Administration</li><li>United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development</li><li>Indiana University of Pennsylvania</li><li>Sustainable Agriculture Task Force</li><li>Andrew Sandeen, Penn State Cooperative Extension Indiana County</li><li>Local Foods, Local Places Steering Committee</li><li>Indiana County Farm Bureau</li><li>Westmoreland Community College</li></ul> |
| **Costs and/or resources needed** | Time |
| **Possible funding sources** | Indiana County Center for Economic Operations |

## Goal 4: Improve walkability and connectivity from surrounding neighborhoods to downtown Indiana.

Downtown Indiana is rated a highly walkable city, but parts of the borough lack access to critical goods and services within walking distance. For instance, residents do not have convenient access to a supermarket

providing a range of fruits and vegetables in downtown. Pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure is missing or in need of repair in some places. Completion of trail systems, additional pedestrian crossings, painting bike lanes or sharrows, and taking steps to calm traffic are important strategies for addressing this gap. Also, many people living in the areas surrounding Indiana lack alternatives to driving. This issue is becoming even more pronounced as the population in the county ages. Programs that help these people access food and other needs are important. The actions in support of this goal all recognize that it is not enough to provide outlets for affordable, healthy and local foods; people must also be able to physically get to these places.

| Action 4.1: Increase the number of bike racks in downtown Indiana. | |
|---|---|
| What this is and why it is important | Expanding bike infrastructure is the first step to encouraging more people to bike to downtown. Indiana County Office of Planning and Development has conducted an assessment identifying the available infrastructure and remaining need, and completed a grant application to fund expansion. |
| Measures of success | • Number of bicyclists in downtown<br>• Number of bike racks |
| Timeframe | 0-12 months |
| Lead | Josh Krug, Senior Planner, Indiana County Office of Planning and Development |
| Supporting cast | • Indiana Borough Planning Commission<br>• Indiana Borough Public Works<br>• Indiana Borough Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee<br>• Pennsylvania Department of Transportation<br>• Indiana County Office of Planning and Development staff<br>• Michael Brown, Associate VP for Facilities Management, Indiana University of PA |
| Costs and/or resources needed | • Funding for bike racks and installation<br>• Grant writing capacity (Indiana County Office of Planning and Development) |
| Possible funding sources | • Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (grant for racks)<br>• Indiana Borough Public Works Department (installation) |

| Action 4.2: Conduct a sidewalk condition assessment of downtown Indiana and make necessary upgrades. | |
|---|---|
| What this is and why it is important | A sidewalk condition assessment will identify issues that inhibit individual mobility around downtown. Upgrades will make walking safer and encourage pedestrian traffic. Property owners are responsible for the maintenance of sidewalks adjacent to their property, but the borough lacks sufficient capacity to oversee adequate enforcement. |
| Measures of success | • Assessment completed<br>• Upgrades completed<br>• Continuous pedestrian network throughout Indiana Borough<br>• Establishment of sidewalk between IUP off-campus housing and state highway (Oakland Avenue) used for accessing services |
| Timeframe | 0-18 months |
| Lead | • Peter Broad (until appropriate borough staff can be identified) |

| Action 4.2: Conduct a sidewalk condition assessment of downtown Indiana and make necessary upgrades. | |
|---|---|
| **Supporting cast** | • Indiana Borough Planning Commission<br>• Downtown businesses<br>• Area churches<br>• Indiana Area School District<br>• Indiana University of Pennsylvania<br>• Dreama VanCise Watta, Indiana Borough Bicycle & Pedestrian Committee<br>• Stiffler, McGraw Engineering Firm utilized by Indiana Borough<br>• Indiana Area Regional Medical Center |
| **Costs and/or resources needed** | • Additional resources (at least one more person) for code enforcement to ensure property owners maintain sidewalks adjacent to their property.<br>• Previous 2018 Planning Commission assessment of specific problem areas in the Borough<br>• Pennsylvania Department of Health WalkWorks assessment completed by Indiana County Office of Planning and Development  for their grant application |
| **Possible funding sources** | • Indiana Borough general fund<br>• Revolving loan fund for property owners to assist in sidewalk maintenance<br>• HUD Community Development Block Grant |

| Action 4.3: Increase signage for walkability to downtown with QR codes or other digital technologies. | |
|---|---|
| **What this is and why it is important** | QR codes/Snapcodes are digital barcodes that can be scanned with a smart phone app to access more information about a topic. Given their compact size, they can be a space-saving communication tool. Research should be conducted regarding the best media/digital outreach strategies for signage. Adding signage directing people on foot to walkable points of interest downtown could promote tourism, health, and business patronage. |
| **Measures of success** | • Number of signs posted<br>• On-line tracking of QR websites |
| **Timeframe** | 18-24 months |
| **Lead** | Barbara Hauge, Indiana County WalkWorks Program Manager |
| **Supporting cast** | • Indiana County Chamber of Commerce<br>• Indiana County Tourist Bureau (for signs)<br>• Assessment of signage needs<br>• Indiana County Technology Center<br>• Indiana University of Pennsylvania Office of Service Learning<br>• Indiana Borough<br>• Indiana County Office of Planning and Development<br>• Indiana University of PA Instructional Design & Technology program faculty (Jacqueline McGinty) and graduate students |

| Action 4.3: Increase signage for walkability to downtown with QR codes or other digital technologies. | |
|---|---|
| Costs and/or resources needed | • Assessment of signage needs<br>• Design and purchase of signs<br>• Research needed to determine best strategy for digital media outreach- Dr. McGinty will provide support. |
| Possible funding sources | • Indiana Rotary Club<br>• Civic groups<br>• Corporate grants<br>• Businesses |

| Action 4.4. Ensure access to downtown area by people in areas surrounding Indiana who have limited transportation options. | |
|---|---|
| What this is and why it is important | Many people, particularly those who are aging and/or have disabilities, that live in the areas surrounding Indiana lack the means to travel to downtown Indiana, and have limited access to fresh, local food. |
| Measures of success | Increase numbers of individuals coming to downtown Indiana who currently have limited access |
| Timeframe | 18-24 months |
| Lead | Susan Boser, IUP Sociology Department and Indiana County Sustainable Economic Development Task Force |
| Supporting cast | • Area Agency on Aging<br>• Indiana County Redevelopment Authority<br>• Indiana County Transportation Authority |
| Costs and/or resources needed | • Assessment of potential pockets of individuals who lack alternative transportation to downtown area<br>• Assessment to determine the extent to which individuals who lack alternative transportation are aware of the options available to them through the Indiana County Transportation Authority<br>• Explore options with IndiGo Transport to provide transportation to identified individuals |
| Possible funding sources | Department of Community and Economic Development |

## Goal 5: Increase the recognition and utilization of downtown Indiana as an asset for the community.

Between 2010 and 2014, the Borough of Indiana completed initial pieces of a multi-phase program of comprehensive street corridor capital improvements and enhancements. Upgrades covering eight blocks of downtown include new concrete sidewalks with decorative brick pavers; historic-style street lights; curbs and ramps; landscaping and furnishings; traffic signals and street signage; underground conduits for utilities;

repair/replacement of storm drainage, water, and sewer utilities; and replacement of steps and walls along the historic "Vinegar Hill." Indiana also boasts six properties individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places including the Old Borough Hall, the Old Courthouse, the Old Jail and Sheriff's Office, the James Mitchell House, the Silas M. Clark House and the National Guard Armory. Over the past ten years, the borough has also received numerous awards for its commitment to environmental best practices. Despite these positive developments, many people harbor negative impressions of downtown that are no longer accurate. Helping residents recognize that downtown is an asset to the community would increase the number of people who visit and spend money downtown, helping downtown businesses to thrive.

| Action 5.1: Develop a public relations and marketing plan to address parking misconceptions and improve public perception. | |
|---|---|
| What this is and why it is important | The perception that parking is difficult and/or expensive discourages people from coming downtown. People get a ticket once and remember it forever. However, the reality is that parking downtown is plentiful and inexpensive as compared to other localities. There could be more (or better) signage for parking, especially to help people know where to access the centrally located parking garage. Helping residents understand the hidden costs of free parking could be part of the public relations plan. It might be necessary to evaluate parking trends to ensure metered hours and pricing are aligned with demand for a given space at a given time. |
| Measures of success | • Public relations and marketing plan is developed<br>• Borough Council adopts the plan<br>• Funding is secured for implementation<br>• Plan is implemented |
| Timeframe | • Work should begin once new Indiana Borough Parking Director's orientation is complete (tentatively, January 2019)<br>• Report should go to Indiana Borough Public Safety Committee in February and to the Borough Council in March, 2019 |
| Lead | • Parking Director: Lieutenant Justin Schawl, Indiana Borough Police Department, Special Services Division |
| Supporting cast | • Downtown Indiana, Inc.<br>• Downtown merchants and business owners<br>• Indiana Gazette<br>• Renda Broadcasting Indiana, PA (radio) |
| Costs and/or resources needed | • Time<br>• Outreach materials<br>• Signage identifying the parking garage, and walking path from garage to IRMC Park |
| Possible funding sources | Borough of Indiana budget |

| Action 5.2: Collaborate with Indiana County Farmers' Market to explore Indiana Regional Medical Center (IRMC) Park and other potential locations as a mid-week location for the market. ||
|---|---|
| What this is and why it is important | Currently, there is a farmers' market held downtown on Saturdays and elsewhere mid-week. Hosting a mid-week farmers' market in downtown would capture the work week population of Indiana and generate increased pedestrian traffic for local businesses. In order to assess the desirability of this or any other change in location (or hours), it would be important to get community input from both current and potential customers and vendors, including the impact on those preferring the current mid-week location. |
| Measures of success | • Enlist appropriate IUP faculty and/or students to get community input from both current and potential customers and vendors; analyze survey results<br>• Use survey results to assess the desirability of moving to IRMC Park and/or other locations to develop a strategy for effectively addressing challenges<br>• Enlist appropriate IUP faculty and/or students who could assist with developing a marketing plan for the Indiana Farmers' Market<br>• Farmers Market approaches Borough Council for permission to use IRMC Park for a mid-week event<br>• Mid-week market moved to IRMC Park<br>• Increased number of vendors<br>• Increased vendor sales |
| Timeframe | Work could begin in 4 months (upon Council approval) and be completed by June 2019 when season begins. Getting the needed community and vendor input, plus developing a strategy for addressing challenges with the assistance of IUP faculty and/or students, could potentially slow this process down considerably. It will then be important to enlist appropriate IUP faculty and/or students to assist with developing a marketing plan for the Indiana Farmers' Market. |
| Lead | • Darlene Livingston, Director, PA Farm Link; Co-owner, Mahoning Creek Farm; President, Indiana County Farmers' Market<br>• Peter Broad, President, Indiana Borough Council<br>• Dr. Susan Boser, Professor, IUP Dept. of Sociology; Indiana County Sustainable Economic Development Task Force |
| Supporting cast | • Indiana Borough Council<br>• Downtown Indiana<br>• Center for Community Growth<br>• Indiana County Tourist Bureau<br>• Chamber of Commerce<br>• Indiana University of PA faculty and students (surveys): Dr. Susan Boser (Sociology) and Dr. Jacqueline McGinty (Professional Studies in Education) have offered to help. |
| Costs and/or resources needed | Cost of closing IRMC Park (minimal), but the Borough Council can waive fees<br>Time, money to conduct a survey of the community and current/prospective vendors |
| Possible funding sources | N/A |

| Action 5.3: Incorporate local food and agriculture into the annual Northern Appalachian Folk Festival, an annual event in downtown Indiana. | |
|---|---|
| What this is and why it is important | The Northern Appalachian Folk Festival, held the weekend after Labor Day each year in downtown Indiana, celebrates the region's art and culture with free live music, educational programming, and vendors. For the past two years, the event theme has highlighted the region's industrial heritage with a focus on its lumber and coal mining histories. Organizers invite vendors and exhibitors (e.g., food, art, antiques, non-profits) to table and provide demonstrations of their products or crafts. There is an opportunity to grow the participation of local food producers vending at this annual event and to raise consumer awareness of the importance of agriculture to the local economy. The Northern Appalachian Folk Festival and the Saturday Indiana Farmers' Market could potentially both benefit by promoting the other, since the two events take place within a short walking distance of each other. |
| Measures of success | • Year over year increase in the number of vendors providing local food at the folk festival.<br>• Agriculture highlighted as an industrial heritage theme of the festival<br>• Increased revenue to Farmers Market on the day of festival. |
| Timeframe | 0-24 months |
| Lead | Linda Mitchell, Executive Director, Downtown Indiana |
| Supporting cast | • Farmers<br>• Artisan food vendors<br>• Northern Appalachian Folk Festival Committee<br>• Farmers' Market |
| Costs and/or resources needed | • Consider possibility of reduced cost, or an identifiable space for vendors providing local food<br>• Possibility of signage to guide visitors between existing Farmers Market and festival |
| Possible funding sources | N/A |

Additional Goal 5 Actions:

- Create a "grown locally" logo and signage for restaurants to use.

# IMPLEMENTATION AND NEXT STEPS

The steering committee held three calls in the weeks following the workshop to share progress updates, review the community action plan for relevancy and accuracy, and discuss outreach strategies for maintaining momentum and stakeholder engagement in the process. Early progress and planning include the following:

- Several volunteers from Spirit Life have assisted at the Indiana County Community Garden.
- There is an expressed interest by experienced farmers to mentor new food businesses and young farmers.
- The Borough of Indiana has a request for proposal process underway for its multi-modal corridor project. The Borough Council received four bids for completing the multimodal corridor and will interview teams and select one of them in December.
- The Borough of Indiana completed a detailed map of all the bicycle racks in town and identified where it needs more.
- The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture with other partners hosted two institutional wholesaling workshops in December in Harrisburg and Pittsburg.
- An initial meeting to explore the possibility of IRMC Park as a host site for the farmers market (Action 5.2) is planned in December.
- The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture Special Assistant for Workforce Development invited Indiana County to be part of a collaborative aimed at addressing workforce shortages, education challenges, and economic development opportunities in the agriculture and food sector in Pennsylvania. The collaborative will seek funding from Pennsylvania Governor Wolf's Next Generation Industry Partnership Initiative which identifies needs of an industry and addresses those needs through information sharing, strategic planning, and implementation of best management practices.

# APPENDICES

- Appendix A – Workshop Exercise Results
- Appendix B – Workshop Participants
- Appendix C – Workshop Photo Album
- Appendix D – Community Data Profile
- Appendix E – Funding Resources
- Appendix F – References