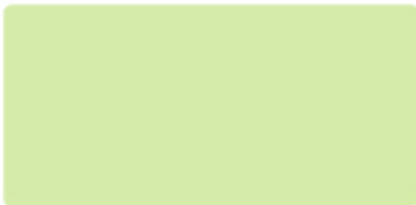
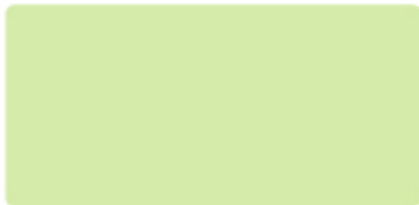
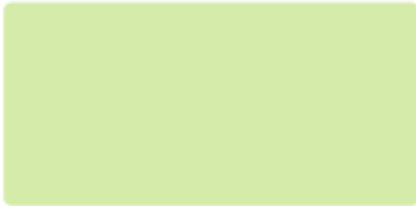
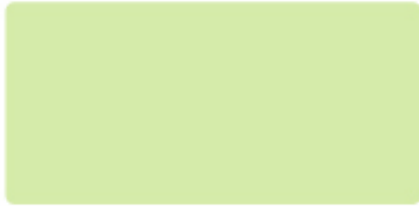
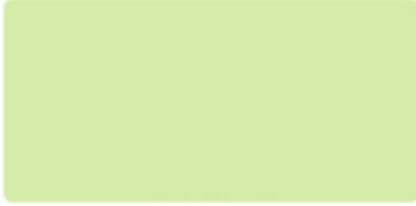
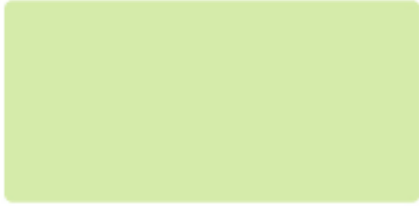


LOCAL FOODS, LOCAL PLACES

Technical Assistance Program



Strengthening the
Local Foods System
and Downtown
Revitalization:

Actions and Strategies
for the City of Fallon,
Nevada

June 22, 2015



Community Story

Fallon is a city of just over 8,500 people in the Lahontan Valley. It is located in Churchill County, approximately 60 miles east of Reno at the junction of US Highway 50 (“Loneliest Road in America”) and US Highway 95. Fallon, nicknamed “The Oasis of Nevada,” has many valuable assets for a city of its size. Despite the aridness of the region, the area is heavily agricultural with roughly 50,000 acres in pastureland irrigated with water from the Truckee-Carson Irrigation District. Additionally, the Naval Air Station Fallon is the only Navy facility in existence where an entire carrier air wing can conduct comprehensive training while integrating every element of the air-wing into realistic battle scenarios and also includes the Navy’s longest runway at 14,000 feet. The Naval Air Station is the largest employer of the area.



Fallon’s downtown is a mixture of local businesses and vacant buildings in need of revitalization and reuse.

During the financial downturn, Fallon lost two grocery stores, one located in the downtown corridor. The remaining grocery stores, Safeway and Walmart, are located on the far west side of town along a main thoroughfare not easily accessible by people who do not own automobiles. The city’s only public transportation is provided on an annual grant basis and limited to seniors. Fallon’s only two grocery stores serve a rural community of roughly 32,000 people, and serve as regional grocery stores for an outlying rural area of four counties, nine communities, and four Indian Tribes.

The Churchill Economic Development Authority (CEDA), an economic and community development organization, together along with several other community organizations, education institutions, and local governments joined together in response to the social and economic problems created by the loss of the two grocery stores. The goal of the organization is to reestablish a community market in one of the old, abandoned grocery store buildings in Fallon’s historic downtown along Maine Street, closer to the eastern edge of the community, as part of a comprehensive revitalization project.



Kent’s Grocery closed its doors in 1992. CEDA is working to reestablish the building as grocery store for the community to draw traffic downtown and expand the local food economy.

Agriculture is a key industry to the Churchill County regional economy and employs approximately 566 people (5.7% of the County’s total population). Within the City of Fallon, 156 (4.2%) are involved in the agricultural industry. Approximately two-thirds of Churchill’s 672 farms produce food as shown in Figure 1. However, while the county generates more than \$89 million in agricultural sales, only about \$914,000 of this amount is through direct-to-consumer channels such as farmers markets, roadside stands, or

community supported agriculture programs. Fallon’s residents spend about \$20 million per year on food.

Figure 1 - Agricultural Statistics for Churchill County, Nevada

U.S. Agriculture Census Figure	2007	2012
Total Farms	529	672
Vegetable Farms	6	24
Fruit, Tree Nut, and Berry Farms	4	25
Livestock, Poultry, and their Products Farms	294	380
Total Agricultural Sales	\$66.9 million	\$89.9 million
Agricultural Sales Direct to Consumers	\$652,000	\$914,000

Previous discussions with local business owners about making specific improvements to improve the visibility and sales in Downtown Fallon have helped create the momentum to create a realistic plan to revitalize Fallon’s Maine Street corridor, as well the entire regional community. The corridor revitalization will not only improve the city’s economic health but also the health of its residents. Currently, 28.8 percent if the county’s adults are considered obese and 8.9 percent of the county’s adults have diabetes. More than 27 percent of Churchill County’s adults have high blood pressure. These rates are all slightly higher than the state averages. Furthermore, about 81 percent of the county’s adults eat less than the recommended five servings of fruit and vegetables per day.¹ This figure may be even higher in Fallon following the loss of its supermarkets.

In 2014, the Churchill Economic Development Authority requested assistance through the Local Foods, Local Places program to develop an action plan for achieving its vision. The program is supported by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), and the Delta Regional Authority (DRA). These agencies worked with the community to develop the following action plan. Implementing the actions described later in this plan can bring several benefits to the community including:

- More economic opportunities for local farmers and business.
- Better access to healthy local food, especially among disadvantaged groups.
- A revitalized downtown that is the economic anchor of the community.

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Health Indicators Warehouse. <http://www.healthindicators.gov/>.

Engagement

The community hosted a small team of federal agency staff and consultants for a two-day workshop on February 24-25, 2015. The workshop also included a tour of Fallon and a series of visioning, brainstorming, and action planning discussions among a diverse group of citizens and local, state, and federal stakeholders. These discussions helped workshop participants identify community values that underlie the action plan for their local food system initiatives, including starting a community-owned grocery. These sessions also clarified how local foods can help make Fallon and Churchill County a stronger, healthier, and more economically sound community. Participants identified obstacles to and solutions for expanding access to local foods and created an action plan that is described herein.



Rick Lattin of Lattin Farms participating in the action planning session on day two of the workshop.

Among those in attendance were state and local elected officials, business owners, farmers, restaurant chefs, staff from the Churchill Economic Development Authority, high school and college students, local newspaper and magazine publishers, and regional and federal agencies including USDA-RD and HUD. While the two-day workshop is the key event that contributed to this action plan, it was preceded by several conference calls, background research, and case study development. Figure 2 lays out the three phases of the technical assistance process, including an assessment phase, the convening of the workshop and the post-workshop documentation and implementation phase.

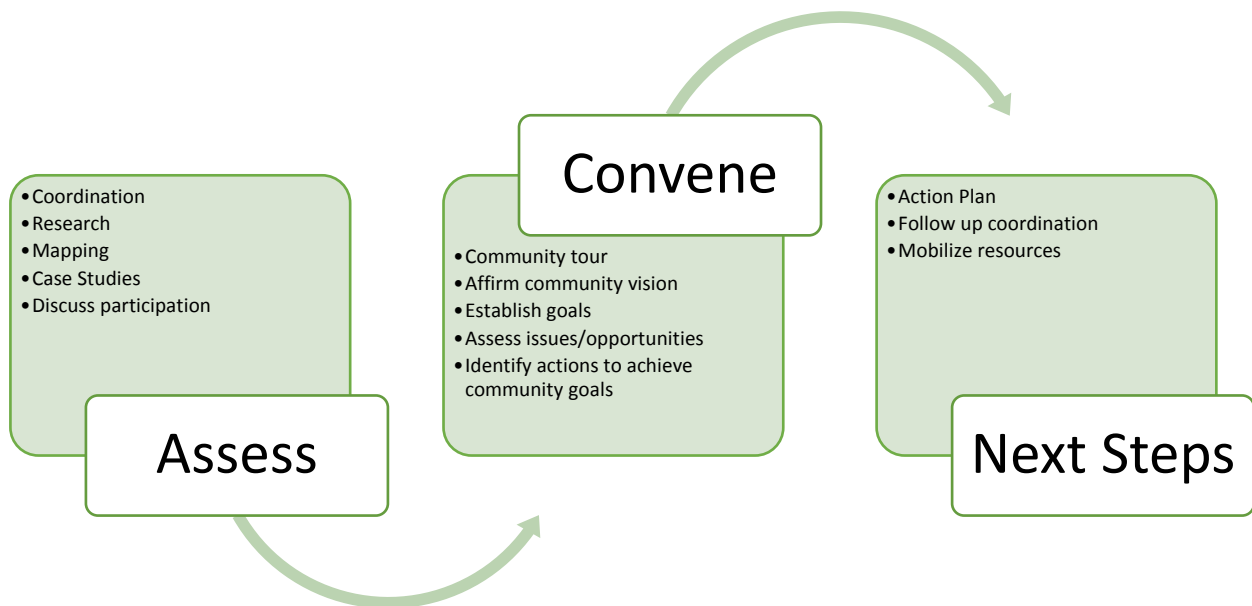


Figure 1 - Technical Assistance Process Diagram

Vision

The vision of the community is to establish a locally-owned and operated local food store in downtown Fallon with capabilities that will help support a more vibrant local food economy with value-added production and distribution function. Some of the specific initiatives the community is focused on related to the locally-owned grocery store include:

- Organization and social framework
- Production and supply
- Demand, marketing, outreach
- Physical space and infrastructure needs
- Programming and activities

The workshop facilitators led several exercises and discussions during the two days that helped workshop participants refine these goals and identify specific actions for achieving them.

During the first night of the workshop series people were asked to give statements about what they believe in their community and what they believe about local foods in Fallon. This helped set the tone for the workshop and vocalize the beliefs of the community as they move forward with their goal areas. The goals are shown in Figure 3.



The “This I believe in our community...” exercise revealed that many of the people living in Fallon value their rich history and have a sense of pride in their traditional family-style community.



Figure 3: Goals for Advancing the Fallon Downtown Grocery Store

Workshop participants also identified some action steps for achieving each goal. Additional actions have been added by the workshop facilitators to supplement the actions needed to achieve these goals. The goals and corresponding actions are outlined in the Action Plan section.

Action Plan

The workshop focused in on the community-owned grocery concept and determining needed actions to take to move forward. Participants identified several action steps for achieving each goal. The goals and corresponding actions are outlined in this section. The first two goals, which are related specifically to the co-op grocery, include steps that can be accomplished in the next 100 days since these are the most pressing actions to focus on. The purpose of the “next 100 days” actions is to keep the workshop momentum going and to keep this plan at the forefront of stakeholders’ attention. Other actions that are less pressing have “First Steps” to help get the ball rolling with achieving each action. The goals and action items are presented in Appendix A in their complete form, which includes a time frame, lead role, supporting cast, cost, funding sources, and near-term steps.

GOAL 1: Organize stakeholders to initiate a community-owned grocery store

Action 1.1: Create an exploratory committee to oversee the community-owned grocery store and its component parts

Action 1.2: Conduct a market feasibility study for the community-owned grocery store

Action 1.3: Organize a kick-off fundraiser dinner/Kickstarter campaign

Action 1.4: Sell store credits to community members

GOAL 2: Identify production and supply assets in the community

Action 2.1: Survey local farmers about products being produced

Action 2.2: Identify local producers and artisans in the community

GOAL 3: Create a marketing and outreach campaign for local foods and the grocery store

Action 3.1: “Why Invest Local” campaign

Action 3.2: Tour of the proposed community-owned grocery store building and site

Action 3.3: Survey potential store customers to identify desired foods, products, and services

GOAL 4: Identify physical and infrastructural needs of the grocery store site

Action 4.1: Ensure the grocery store building is up to code and ready for occupancy

Action 4.2: Clean-up grocery store building interior and site

Action 4.3: Open a pop-up grocery store in the building by June 1, 2015

Action 4.4: Layout and design the store space to positively impact the store’s success

GOAL 5: Link grocery store to local food-oriented programs and activities

Action 5.1: Offer a variety of educational classes to promote local foods and products

Action 5.2: Create a training program for all grocery store employees and volunteers

Connecting Livability to Local Food in Fallon

Livability is the understanding that the environment, economy, and community are all one interconnected entity that affect lives daily. Cities and towns that are focused on improving livability, such as Fallon, are taking steps to strengthen their local economy, encourage growth and development in existing neighborhoods, and enhancing what is unique about their community.

Fallon realizes that supporting local foods and the reinvestment of Maine Street, including the proposed local grocery store, is an effective way to attract more investment and bring more people to downtown. The community made a substantial investment, starting the improvements to downtown several years ago and is now, along with Churchill Economic Development Authority, the Downtown Merchants’ Association, and several other groups and agencies, playing a key role in Fallon’s future. Renewed infrastructure, streetscaping, and pocket parks have helped encourage more business investment and created reasons for visitors and residents to go downtown. Fallon has a “classic hometown” feel and by re-establishing downtown as a community gathering place it is preserving what many other communities across the nation are losing through urban sprawl and unfocused growth.

Implementation

Following the workshop the steering committee, led by Rachel and CEDA staff, was in pretty regular communication. Working with the committee, CEDA made progress on putting together a Local Food Promotion Program Grant USDA which was submitted May 14, 2015. The grant requested financial support to get the local food retail store and aggregation hub at the downtown location up and running. The request is for rental costs, infrastructure improvements, as well as store management and operations. CEDA has drafted documents for creating a coop business and are having their attorney review the documents. They are not targeting opening this year but if they get the LFPP grant then funds would be available this fall, and they could realistically target the spring of 2016 for an opening.

In addition, CEDA has been in touch with the US. Department of Defense Economic Adjustment Office, which helps communities impacted by military installations with such things as technical grants, funding and consultation. They are exploring a two-page proposal for the Maine Street store. They are also considering the potential of acquiring a refrigerated truck to deliver to help extend the reach of the

downtown store and hub so that food can be delivered more regionally, and notably reach the three nearby Tribal nations.

CEDA is also targeting a Rural Business Development Grant, which is due July 17, 2015, as part of the USDA State allocation in Nevada. CEDA continues to work with key community stakeholders to help realize the goals and actions identified during the workshop and remains optimistic they can realize the vision of a vibrant, successful local food store in a prominent downtown location, near existing neighborhoods and populations in need.

Appendices

- Appendix A – Action Plan Details
- Appendix B – Local Food System Diagram
- Appendix C – Workshop Participants
- Appendix D – Workshop Presentation
- Appendix E – Workshop Photo Album
- Appendix F – Funding Resources
- Appendix G – References