



Community Action Plan for Silver City, New Mexico

LOCAL FOODS, LOCAL PLACES TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

August 2018

For more information about Local Foods, Local Places visit:

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

Contact Information:

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Project Contact: Michelle Madeley
Office of Community Revitalization
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Ave. NW (MC 1807T)
Washington, DC 20460
Tel 202-566-1566
madeley.michelle@epa.gov

Silver City Contact: Kristin Lundgren
The Commons: Center for Food Security and Sustainability
501 East 13th Street
Silver City, New Mexico 88061
Tel 575-388-2988
kristin@tvcgrantcounty.org

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COMMUNITY STORY

Silver City, New Mexico, the county seat of Grant county and the home of Western New Mexico University, is a community of about 10,000 people in the far western part of the state.¹ Originally an Apache camp, and later a small Spanish settlement, the current town was founded in the 1870s by prospectors after silver was discovered in the nearby hills.²

Mining came to play a very important role in the local and regional economy, and continues to play an outsize role in Grant County's economy. The Tyrone and Chino mines generate economic activity and benefits for the county, but

employment fluctuates depending on commodities prices.³ This dependency on mining presents a challenge for the town, which seeks to diversify its economy.

Silver City's population is 56 percent Latino and reflects its history as a Spanish mission and prospector boom town.⁴ Poverty and resulting food insecurity are issues throughout Grant County. One in four youth and one in three seniors are not getting enough to eat. In Silver City, 13 percent of people live in poverty,⁵ and in Grant County, 22 percent of residents qualify for SNAP benefits.⁶

To address these economic stressors, several organizations and businesses in Silver City have taken steps to mobilize its large number of underutilized food business resources. In 2017, the Center for Food Security and Sustainability (previously named the Volunteer Center of Grant County) started a Grant County Gleaners Group to harvest produce from nearby fruit trees that would otherwise have gone to waste. This fruit was distributed at the food pantry; turned into preserves, cider, and fruit leathers, which were sold for fundraising; and finally gifted back to volunteer harvesters and tree owners.⁷ The Community Orchard Project



Figure 1. The Silver City Coop, located downtown, sells locally grown produce and is a community asset.

¹ U.S. Census Bureau. "QuickFacts – Population Estimates July 1, 2017." <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/PST045217>.

² Town of Silver City. "About Silver City." http://www.townofsilvercity.org/r/town_of_silver_city_NM.php?r=22,9fgzn. Accessed Sep. 6, 2018.

³ Bohannon Huston, Inc. "Grant County Comprehensive Plan 2017."

http://www.grantcountynm.com/2017_compplan/Grant_County_Comprehensive_Plan-r2.pdf. Accessed September 6, 2018.

⁴ U.S. Census Bureau. Op. cit.

⁵ U.S. Census Bureau. Op. cit.

⁶ Healthy Food Access Portal/Demographics. <http://www.healthyfoodaccess.org/access-101/research-your-community>

⁷ Silver City Local Foods, Local Places Application

complements these efforts by planting new mini orchards around the community in school gardens, on city property, and elsewhere. At a recent festival, the town received a mill to grind plentiful mesquite pods into flour, which can bring in income through local and regional sales. The Silver City Food Coop buys and sells food grown locally, helping to support backyard growers in the community. Beyond these completed projects, the town also has plans to develop a comprehensive education program to highlight the abundant food resources available in the community, and the Silver City Farmers Market is working to enhance their weekly downtown farmers market and engage residents.⁸

The Silver City community is committed to furthering the efforts of these businesses and organizations as a path to revitalizing Silver City, growing economic opportunity, and bringing the community together. In 2017, Silver City applied for technical assistance through the Local Foods, Local Places program to bring together stakeholders to map the community assets and needs, develop an action plan, and then implement that plan to strengthen the community's local food economy downtown.

The community partners who applied for the LFLP program want to strengthen the farmers market, reduce food waste, and create more abundant garden spaces in their community to increase access to local foods. They also want to make the community more aware of the resources they have available to them such as the farmers market while encouraging more growers to participate and sell produce at the market so there is a constant supply of food available.



Figure 2. The Commons: Center for Food Security and Sustainability has gardens, educational space, and serves as a food bank.



Figure 3. Downtown Silver City.

⁸ Silver City Local Foods, Local Places Application

In 2017, Silver City requested assistance through the Local Foods, Local Places (LFLP) program to develop an action plan for promoting local food systems, and healthy, walkable, economically vibrant communities. 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, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Delta Regional Authority. Silver City, New Mexico, was one of 16 communities across the United States selected to participate in the program in 2018.

A Local Foods, Local Places steering committee was formed in Silver City in preparation for this technical assistance award, and is comprised of a variety of community partners (see Figure 4). They were supported by a technical assistance team comprised of multiple federal and state agency partners (Figure 5). The Steering Committee expressed a desire to gain support in bringing together its strengths, map the community assets and needs, develop an action plan, and then implement that plan to strengthen the community's local food economy downtown.

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 Silver City's goals.

Local Foods, Local Places Steering Committee

- **Kristin Lundgren**, The Volunteer Center of Grant County
- **Alicia Edwards**, Healthy Kids Healthy Communities Grant County
- **Charmeine Wait**, Silver City MainStreet
- **Ben Rasmussen**, National Center for Frontier Communities; Southwest Center for Health Innovation
- **Mike Madigan**, Silver City Food Co-op

Figure 4 - Steering Committee Members

Local Foods, Local Places Technical Assistance Team

- **Michelle Madeley and Melissa Kramer**, EPA Office of Community Revitalization
- **Suzanna Perea and Debra Tellez**, EPA Region 6
- **Debra Tropp and Samantha Schaffstall**, USDA Agriculture Marketing Service
- **Clyde Hudson**, USDA Rural Development
- **Monica Gonzales**, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
- **Adolfo Vasquez**, U.S. Small Business Administration
- **Rebecca Cook, Jennifer Muus, and Savannah Richards**, New Mexico Environment Department
- **Priscilla Lucero**, Southwest New Mexico Council of Governments

Figure 5 -- Technical Assistance Team and federal and state partners

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. The community workshop was held over a two-day period from August 1 to August 2, and the activities those days are described below. Workshop exercise results are summarized in **Appendix A**, workshop sign-in sheets are provided in **Appendix B**, a workshop photo album is provided in **Appendix C**, a data profile in **Appendix D**, and funding resources in **Appendix E** and general references in **Appendix F**.

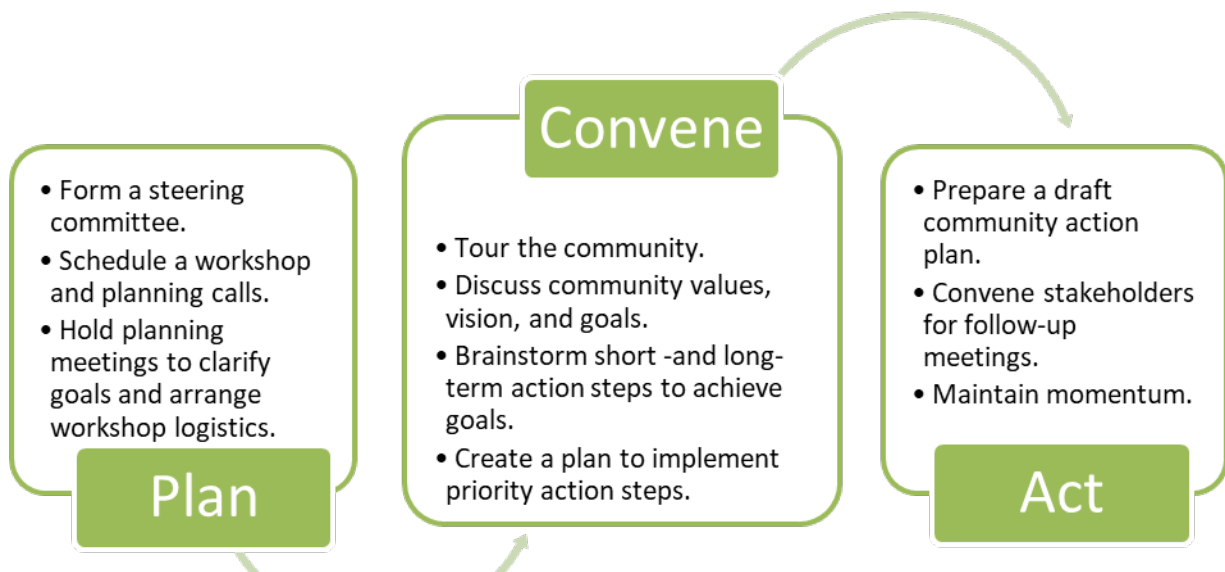


Figure 6. Local Foods, Local Places Technical Assistance Process Diagram

COMMUNITY TOUR

After meeting for lunch at Revel, a downtown restaurant that purchases and serves local food, the steering committee led visiting federal and state partners on a walking tour of downtown Silver City.



Figure 7. The Steering Committee led a walking tour through downtown Silver City.

The group walked through the park alongside the San Vicente Creek known as the Big Ditch. The Big Ditch is now a shaded creekside park and walking path, but was originally Silver City's Main Street, until multiple floods led to the city relocating the Main Street to Bullard Street, which is established on higher ground.

While the farmers market was not open during the workshop days, the group did see the downtown parking lot where the farmers market takes place weekly. Currently, the gravel parking lot is transformed into a market space, but the Silver City Main Street organization is leading a plan to install permanent fixtures, starting with a restroom, and eventually a farmers market pavilion.

The group also visited the Silver City Food Coop and learned about the successful downtown retail space, membership, and local food procurement. The Silver City Food Coop had also recently acquired a new building a couple blocks north (still in downtown), so the group also saw the larger building and new site that the Coop will determine how best to use in the coming months.

Due to a sudden hailstorm, the tour was cut short, and out-of-town visitors had the chance to see what the sudden flooding looks like in Silver City!

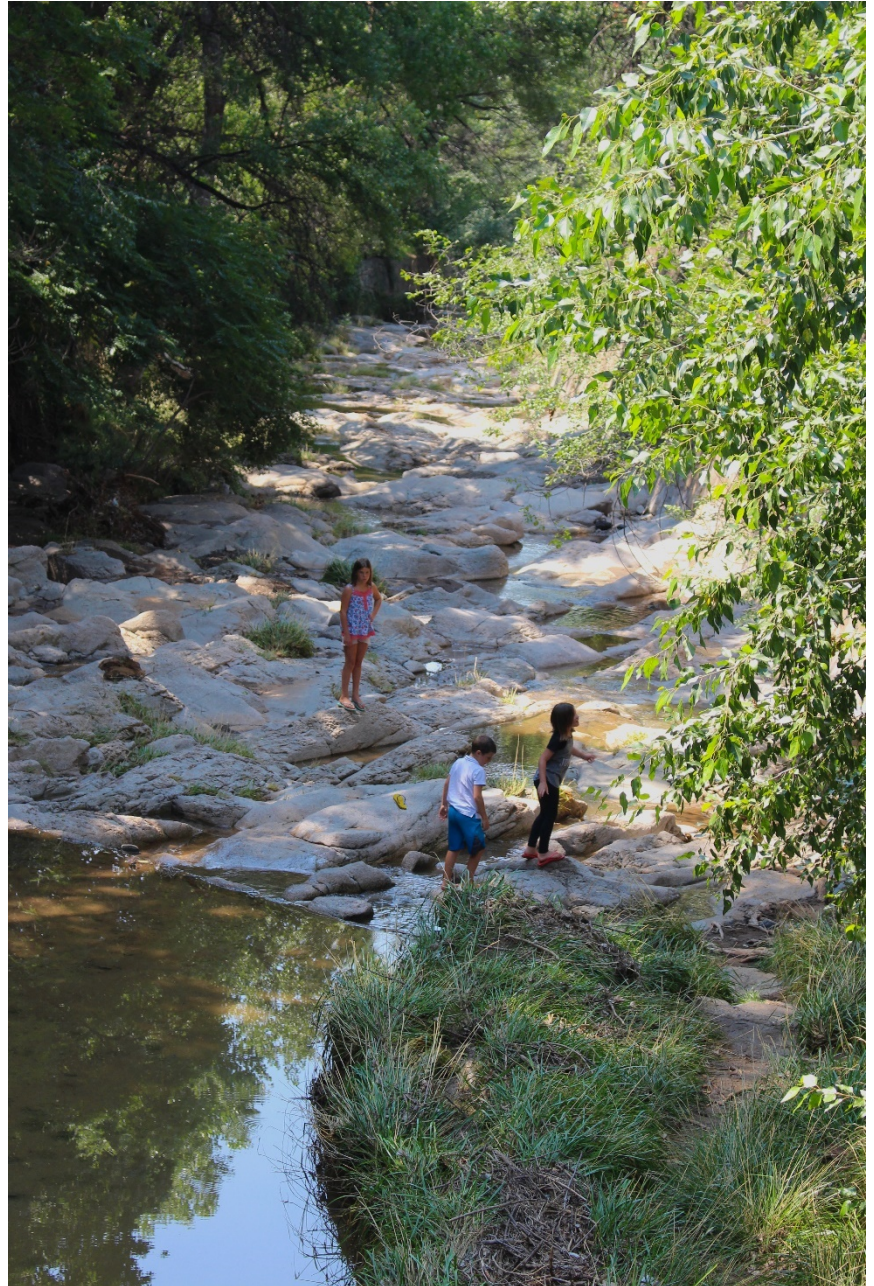


Figure 8. Children play in the San Vicente Creek (the Big Ditch).

VISION AND VALUES

During the workshop's first session on the evening of August 1st, Kristin Lundgren and Alicia Edwards welcomed attendees and provided background about past initiatives related to local food system development and revitalization in Silver City and Grant County. The facilitators then introduced the Local Foods, Local Places program, highlighted the benefits of a local food system, and shared examples from other communities.

Attendees participated in two exercises to elicit input on community values and a common vision for the future of Silver City and Grant County. First, the facilitators asked participants to complete the statements, "I believe that Silver City..." and "I believe that Silver City's local food system..." Several key overarching themes emerged, including recognition of the unique culture, sense of possibility, and a desire to work through challenges collectively (Figure 9).

In a second exercise, the facilitators asked workshop participants to write aspirational newspaper headlines for 5-10 years into the future, imagining what progress they would like to see in the development of Silver City's local food system and revitalization of downtown (Figure 10). The complete set of community responses to each of the workshop exercises is in **Appendix C**.

The input from these exercises informed the community's next steps in the action planning process and illustrated alignment on certain concepts, highlighting potential areas of emphasis for the action plan.

I believe that Silver City...

- *Has a lot of underutilized resources that need to be tapped into, but it needs to happen with respect for our generations.*
- *Has wonderful energy and natural beauty, and impressive monsoon rains with hail!*
- *Is a community that cares deeply about its well-being but has a challenging economy to thrive in.*
- *Is a town with many possibilities, opportunities for growth, and great things to offer.*
- *Has too many ideas and not enough project managers.*
- *Has an overlooked community that has rich culture and history.*
- *Has a great quality of place!*

I believe that Silver City's local food system...

- *Already has some delicious food, with more to come.*
- *Can be more inclusive.*
- *Is making a difference in the community.*
- *Is on the cusp of blooming into a truly sustainable system of local growers, supplying our stores, restaurants, and value-added producers.*
- *Is strengthened by a vast group of caring and compassionate individuals willing to collaborate to develop sustainable, healthy communities.*
- *Is in its humble beginnings and can take on a distinct local flavor.*
- *Could really benefit from more entrepreneurial spirit.*
- *Has incredible potential for growth.*

Figure 9. During a workshop exercise, participants were asked to complete the statements "I believe that Silver City..." and "I believe that Silver City's local food system..." Some of thoughts shared during this exercise are shown above, reflecting positive ideas.

Vision and Values

- *Food Economy Employs Quarter of Workforce in Grant County.*
- *Grant County Wins National Healthy Community Award*
- *Millionaire Restaurateurs Receive James Beard Award! Bullard Street Shut Down for the Harvest Festival with Record Attendance!*
- *Community Heals Past Segregation Woes/Wounds with Garden Projects and Abundant Economic Growth*
- *Silver City Solves Hunger Issue with Local Organic Farms*
- *Grant County- The County that Food Saved*

Figure 10 -- Workshop participants imagined an aspirational headline in the local newspaper that they would like to read in 5-10 years showing the progress that has been made in town. Above are a sample of the responses.



Figure 11. This word cloud captures the workshop participants' favorite local food memory that they shared during an introduction exercise.

ASSET MAPPING

The morning of the second workshop day was focused on generating ideas for how Silver City could achieve its goals. Attendees began by introducing themselves along with a favorite memory of a local food. A word cloud of responses shown in Figure 11 reveals the many happy memories that participants shared to set the tone for the day. After introductions, the workshop facilitators shared case studies from other Local Foods, Local Places projects that align with Silver City's ideas and goals.

To encourage workshop participants to discuss and share about assets in the community and document where the assets exist spatially, workshop participants next engaged in an asset mapping exercise. Using maps at three distinct geographic scales, including a downtown map, a city-focused map, and a regional map, small groups identified and documented existing assets in the community and region. Participants plotted and inventoried any areas needing improvement of some kind (red), favorite places and assets (blue), existing food system elements (orange), and opportunities for new food system elements (green). These maps are available in

Appendix C.

ACTION PLAN

The public input, group exercises and brainstorming, and group discussions were important steps in the development of a Local Foods, Local Places action plan. The action plan is organized around the five goals identified by workshop participants and the Local Foods, Local Places Steering Committee. The following action plan outline lists each goal, followed by tables providing details for each goal that clarify the purpose of each action, timeline for completion, roles, and possible sources of support and funding.

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

- Goal 1 – Increase local food production and harvesting.
 - *Action 1.1* – Conduct a feasibility study for a farmer incubator program.
 - *Action 1.2* – Determine the feasibility of a wild food cooperative business through pilot micro-projects and develop a plan with committed partners.
 - *Action 1.3* – Coordinate a community-wide gleaning system by identifying a host organization and volunteers, and building out a program to create jobs from market for excess produce.
 - *Action 1.4* – Use the physical assets at the Commons to build a new revenue stream to support the operations of the Commons.
- Goal 2 – Help local producers bring product to market.
 - *Action 2.1* – Create a farm market stand for small farmers just beginning commercial sales to aggregate their product for sale.
 - *Action 2.2* – Establish channels to communicate what products are available and in season.
 - *Action 2.3* – Continue to grow the food hub and expand activities to include distribution to food pantries.
 - *Action 2.4* – Advocate for a water rate policy change in Silver City to offer a reduced rate for growers.
 - *Action 2.5* – Create a shared refrigeration space for small urban growers.
- Goal 3 – Create a culture of entrepreneurship in the community to develop Silver City as a food destination that benefits residents and tourists.
 - *Action 3.1* – Create a composting cooperative as a pilot to gain greater understanding of best practices for co-op structure and operations.
 - *Action 3.2* – Identify the rules and regulations that are barriers to cottage food businesses and identify best practices for working within regulations (e.g., for food handling).
 - *Action 3.3* – Tap into or create an entrepreneur mentorship program with existing entrepreneurs.
- Goal 4 – Include underserved community members in local food system planning and decision making.
 - *Action 4.1* – Build partnerships to enhance the food system network’s engagement with under-represented members of the community.
 - *Action 4.2* – Establish and improve access and collaboration with local schools (farm to school programs). Identify inspirational teachers/mentors toward development of food-related skillsets.
- Goal 5 – Strengthen Grant county as a food destination with downtown Silver city as a focal point.
 - *Action 5.1* – Create an event committee to sponsor annual event(s) related to food. Include representatives from underrepresented groups.
 - *Action 5.2* – Compile a list of food system assets in Grant County and Silver City to post on various websites, e.g. the city, county, visitor center, etc.
 - *Action 5.3* – Expand farmers market paid staff hours so the market can continue to grow and thrive.
 - *Action 5.4* – Revise farmers market by-laws that prevent the sale of art and prepared foods to allow these types of vendors.

GOAL 1: Increase local food production and harvesting in Silver City, Grant County, and the region to create a reliable supply for local buyers.

Silver City is the commercial center of an agricultural region with wild abundance, including mesquite and fruit. Workshop attendees identified several opportunities to strengthen the ties between food producers and harvesters and the end consumers in Silver City. To address this goal, workshop attendees developed actions that include researching how to conduct a feasibility study for a farmer incubator program; creating a cooperative business that provides opportunities for small businesses and gleaners; coordinating a gleaning system to use wild abundance; and ultimately tying these initiatives into potential options to provide additional revenue streams to The Commons. Value added sector partnerships can help producers process products and make new products. Through investing in revenue-generating business models, workshop attendees viewed these steps as a method for both increasing utilization of food abundance, enhancing and strengthening the existing local food economy, and preserving an understanding of the region's important agricultural heritage.

Action 1.1: Conduct a feasibility study for a farmer incubator program.

What this is and why it is important	The supply of locally grown food is currently insufficient to meet demand in Silver City and Grant County. New farmers are critical to help fill the gap. A feasibility study would identify existing farmers, demand for locally produced food, and infrastructure to support a local food system in the region to help determine whether a farmer incubator program would generate enough new farmers to make it worthwhile. A study could also identify possible funding sources and determine if a farmer incubator program would be financially feasible.
Measures of success	Feasibility study complete and questions about farmers, infrastructure, and funding sources are answered
Timeframe	Short: 3-6 weeks for Alicia and team to identify a lead Feasibility Study: 1 year
Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alicia to identify the lead/shepherd to move this action forward • Grant County Cooperative Extension • Student at New Mexico State University • National Center for Frontier Communities
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alicia to ask Miguel • Western University students could help with research and analysis
Costs and/or resources needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Money for study – amount depends on quality sought • Time and labor on research design
Possible funding sources	TBD

Action 1.2: Determine the feasibility of a wild food cooperative business through pilot micro-projects and develop a plan with committed partners. .

What this is and why it is important	<p>There are underutilized food processing facilities in Silver City; an abundance of available wild food; and skilled growers, harvesters, and culinary artists in the region. There is also a need for processing available apples, apricots, etc. and acquiring a collective license to process and sell products. While a core group of interested participants is established, they would like to enhance coordination among other small batch producers and wild crafters. The group would like to use the next year to implement a series of pilot projects to test the viability of the idea, and also test out procedures and policies for working together as a wild food cooperative. As an example of a pilot project, harvesters could glean excess fruit and work with a value-added producer to preserve the fruit into jams, which could be sold at a booth at the farmers market that is shared among several harvesters/producers. Another pilot project could include a pop-up dinner in collaboration with farmers and chefs. Through this action, the group will test out how to connect all of the pilots into a cohesive wild food cooperative business model that is flexible and responsive to actual yields in any given year. In the second year, the group would like to continue to refine the model and communicate about what's working to build out and grow the model.</p>
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilot system for cooperative businesses developed, adapting models from other places and adding to it • The pilot demonstrates success with a flexible, responsible model and brings in participating partners
Timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year 1: internal feasibility discussion about partners, piloting program • Year 2: collect numbers on revenue and income
Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eric Lynch (The Veggie Pedaler) • Kristin Lundgren (The Commons)
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group of potential partners • The Commons • The Silver City Food Co-op • Local eateries, e.g., Revel
Costs and/or resources needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Commons: space and facilities (e.g. hammermill) • Time
Possible funding sources	USDA Rural Cooperative Development Grant Program

Action 1.3: Coordinate a community-wide gleaning system by identifying a host organization and volunteers, and building out a program to create jobs from market for excess produce.

What this is and why it is important	An abundance of wild fruit is going to waste, and there is a market eager to purchase locally-grown food. The Commons has coordinated gleaning in the past and could be a backbone organization for developing a gleaning system that is even more comprehensive and transformational. A first step might include completing the existing harvest map to facilitate volunteer harvesting at more sites. There is potential for economic return by developing skills and conducting training so people can begin to capture revenue from value-added fruit products. Some examples include providing local fruit tree owners with skilled pruning and maintenance by using a shared inventory of harvesting equipment.
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harvesting map updated/completed • Amount of fruit gleaned and sold • Income generated • Jobs created through this initiative
Timeframe	By next fruit season, June 2019, have a framework or system in place to kick off the initiative.
Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leigh • Kristin Lundgren (The Commons)
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mesquitos wild harvesting group • Volunteer group • Co-op group that is forming
Costs and/or resources needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding for tools/ladders, harvesting bags, and other supplies • Relationship with schools • Willing fruit tree donors
Possible funding sources	TBD

Action 1.4: Use the physical assets at the Commons to build a new revenue stream to support the operations of the Commons.

What this is and why it is important	Obtaining grants is a cumbersome process for rural education programs that the Commons runs. Workshop participants observed that there is an opportunity to leverage the physical assets at the Commons, including the commercial kitchen, to develop a new revenue channel. Social enterprises, including the burgeoning co-op group (Action 1.2) need access to certain physical spaces and equipment that the Commons has. By matching the needs of the entrepreneurial food economy with the Commons' resources, the Commons can have greater financial stability, and depend less on grants.
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Action 1.4: Use the physical assets at the Commons to build a new revenue stream to support the operations of the Commons.

Measures of success	The Commons is on solid financial footing.
Timeframe	1-2 years, through development of previous actions
Lead	The Commons and burgeoning co-op group (Action 1.2)
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Volunteers and organizational representatives (TBD)
Costs and/or resources needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time and effort
Possible funding sources	TBD

Additional Goal 1 Action Ideas

- Help farmers develop alternative revenue streams, e.g. farm stays and farm tourism
- Rehab old farms and orchards
- Create county-wide incentives for new and young farmers to acquire land, water, and startup business support.
- Create fleet farming with decentralized yards, gardens; provide assistance with planting and harvesting. In this model, the landowner could keep 25% of the food.
- Start a farmers' hotline to assist local growers with farming and agricultural questions, utilizing Extension Agency's existing options.
- Find funding for new producer infrastructure and installation.
- Develop curriculum in schools.
- Work with faith-based organizations for food preservation and storage.
- Coordinate food production to avoid overproduction of specific crops.
- Expand a seed education program.
- Expand awareness of the seed library.
- Initiate large-scale composting.
- Sell affordable top soil, compost, wood chips, and local seeds.
- Request lower water rates for local growers.

Goal 2: Help local producers bring product to market.

Silver City does not currently have enough supply of local foods to meet the current demand. The Silver City Food Co-op stocks local food, but the shelves are often empty between deliveries. The Southwest New Mexico Food Hub offers training, coordination, aggregation and good pricing for local growers, but more could be done to help create a more robust local food system with more buyers seeking local products and more growers ready to supply them.

Action 2.1: Create a farm market stand for small farmers just beginning commercial sales to aggregate their product for sale.

What this is and why it is important	Small, beginning farmers have few opportunities to sell their products because of the small and inconsistent quantities and often limited varieties they grow. The main retail outlet is currently the farmers market, which operates just a few hours a week. A collaborative market stand where multiple farmers could aggregate their products would overcome these issues, allowing small growers to benefit from some economies of scale and expanding the supply of local food in the area. The operational structure of the market is still to be determined. One option would be to have individual farmers sell on consignment, rotating responsibility for staffing the market stand.
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stand is developed • Producers and stand operator find it worthwhile to operate • Number of customers coming to the stand • Number of producers selling at the stand • Amount of product sold
Timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify core group of farmers and potential organization by end of 2018. • Begin in the spring 2019
Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ben Rasmussen (Southwest New Mexico Food Hub) • Andrea Warner (Farmers Market) • The Commons
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jane Jansen (Small Business Development Center) • WIC Offices
Costs and/or resources needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time to establish organizational structure, find a location, recruit farmers, and work out other logistics, including the ability to accept EBT and offer double up food bucks • Money for farm stand infrastructure and promotional materials; possibly money for the salary of a person to staff the market stand
Possible funding sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USDA Farmers Market Promotion Program • New Mexico Department of Agriculture

Action 2.2: Establish channels to communicate what products are available and in season to consumers.

What this is and why it is important	Marketing increases product sales. Letting consumers know what is currently in season will encourage them to seek out those products and build awareness of the local food system in southwest New Mexico. Information currently available to consumers is focused at the state level and is not specific enough to the region.
Measures of success	Weekly sales of items advertised increase

Action 2.2: Establish channels to communicate what products are available and in season to consumers.

Timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start spring 2019 • Ongoing
Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ben Rasmussen (Southwest New Mexico Food Hub) • Andrea Warner (Silver City Farmers Market)
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alicia Edwards (Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities) • Mike Madigan (Silver City Food Co-op) • WIC offices • New Mexico Human Services Department • New Mexico Farmers Marketing Association • Grant County Cooperative Extension • Gila Regional Medical Center • Hidalgo Medical Services
Costs and/or resources needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time to put system in place • Money for communication channel
Possible funding sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Mexico Farmers Marketing Association • New Mexico Department of Agriculture

Action 2.3: Continue to grow the food hub and expand activities to include distribution to food pantries.

What this is and why it is important	<p>The food hub is a relatively new venture that seeks to marry increasing supply and demand for local foods. Continuing weekly distributions while increasing both the number of contributing growers and the amount of food sold would help create a sustainable funding stream for the hub. A solid financial footing could in turn help support distribution of local food to food pantries, providing a source of healthy, fresh food to those in need. An expanded and profitable food hub would also help further build the local food economy in the region.</p>
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of growers using the hub • Number of buyers using the hub • Monthly sales of unprocessed and processed food • Food pantry distributions
Timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Double monthly sales and contributing growers by April 2019 • Have enough revenue to begin bulk purchasing and distribution to food pantries by April 2019
Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ben Rasmussen (Southwest New Mexico Food Hub)
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Commons • Silver City Food Co-op • Food pantries in Grant County

Action 2.3: Continue to grow the food hub and expand activities to include distribution to food pantries.

Costs and/or resources needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff time • Volunteer power to pack food and distribute to remote pantries • Funding to maintain operations and expand activities • Van for distributions
Possible funding sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • United Way grant (waiting to hear about application) • Private foundation grant (waiting to hear about application) • USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture Community Food Projects grant • New Mexico Department of Agriculture Specialty Crops Block Grant

Action 2.4: Advocate for municipal changes in Silver City to offer financial incentives for growers.

What this is and why it is important	<p>Growers face many challenges in making farming financially viable on small, urban plots. Providing financial incentives could help attract additional producers who could increase the supply of local food. For example, water is a valuable resource that could be deployed more effectively. The Southwest New Mexico Food Policy Council has been championing an effort to make water rates more affordable for growers in the region. An upcoming decision could mean the policy change takes effect, but there is still more work to be done in clarifying who is eligible for the lower water rights. In addition to water rate breaks, the city might offer urban agriculture the same tax breaks available for land in agricultural production outside of the city. Either of these policy changes might be capped at a set number of producers to minimize the overall financial impact of the policies.</p>
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Silver City offers lower water rates for growers. • No prohibitions on commercial production using city water
Timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submitting proposal on September 1, 2018 • Need to work on definition of qualified growers
Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ben Rasmussen (Southwest New Mexico Food Hub) • Southwest New Mexico Food Policy Council
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town of Silver City • Silver City Food Co-op • Alicia Edwards • Grant County Cooperative Extension • Gila Regional Medical Center • Hidalgo Medical Services
Costs and/or resources needed	<p>Time to implement change and communicate the new policy to growers</p>

Action 2.4: Advocate for municipal changes in Silver City to offer financial incentives for growers.

Possible funding sources	N/A
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Action 2.5: Create a shared refrigeration space for small urban growers.

What this is and why it is important	A refrigerated space helps keep food fresh and last longer, easing the burden of distribution by allowing it to occur over a longer time. It also enables the sale of minimally processed fresh food such as cleaned and bagged greens or cut fruits and vegetables. These products can increase profits for growers, supporting expansion of existing farms and encouraging more people to begin growing and selling food. A shared space would reduce costs for individual farmers and encourage a collective mindset among local growers that would support other collective ventures in Silver City (e.g., the Food Co-op and the Food Hub). Some growers already use The Commons, but demand for the limited space there demonstrates a greater need than it can fulfill.
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A shared refrigeration space exists • The number of growers using the space • The increase in profits for those growers
Timeframe	One year
Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ben Rasmussen (Southwest New Mexico Food Hub)
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food pantries – some would have small, cold storage units available) • Mike Madigan (Silver City Food Co-op)
Costs and/or resources needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding to purchase • From \$1,000 to \$5,000 a month to maintain
Possible funding sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USDA-National Institute of Food and Agriculture Community Food Projects grant to build additional refrigeration spaces • Silver City Food Co-op will be leaving behind refrigeration equipment and a commercial kitchen in the current store space that could possibly be used. • USDA Agriculture Marketing Service architectural services

Additional Goal 2 Action Ideas

- Hire a grant writer to pursue state and federal funding opportunities.
- Bring the farmers market to consumers.
 - Develop a mobile farmers market vehicle that can travel to outlying communities where growers and gardeners can barter and sell goods.
 - Get four town and county vans to use to do mobile markets.

- Create mobile or satellite markets
- Advertise farmers market and food hub products on social media
- Create a local food corner in the big grocery stores
- Conduct cooking demos at the farmers market to promote sales
- Increase buyers of local food (e.g., local schools, food pantry, grocery stores, restaurants) so producers can sell all they grow.

Goal 3: Create a culture of entrepreneurship in the community.

The growing local food system in Silver City and Grant County is already supporting local farmers who are finding increasing interest among purchasers in buying and marketing their products. Multiple opportunities exist for entrepreneurs in the community to grow, process, and market locally branded products to those interested in supporting the regional economy. However, the number of people taking advantage of these opportunities has not met initial expectations. Creating a culture of entrepreneurship could spur additional people to begin growing food for sale, marketing the food they already own, expanding their existing production, and/or creating value-added products. Addressing regulatory barriers and creating a mentorship program could begin to encourage more people to take entrepreneurial risks and generate a culture that builds on itself.

Action 3.1: Create a composting cooperative as a pilot to gain greater understanding of best practices for co-op structure and operations.	
What this is and why it is important	As the local food system expands, cooperatives could help ensure that the participants in the system reap the full economic benefits of their efforts. The Silver City Food Co-op already provides a model for the community to build on. Forming a composting cooperative could help a larger number of people learn about the cooperative model and how cooperatives might be structured and operated for maximum success in Silver City and Grant County given the local circumstances. The resulting compost could also be well used in the area to enrich soils and increase the productivity of local growers.
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When the entity is selling products/services • The number of members (goal: 10 members by 2020)
Timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preliminary research on the legal rules/regulations related to composting: By • Co-op structure determined: By • Members recruited: By • Co-op operating: By March 2019
Lead	TBD

Action 3.1: Create a composting cooperative as a pilot to gain greater understanding of best practices for co-op structure and operations.

Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Western New Mexico University School of Business • Small Business Development Center at Western New Mexico University • San Vicente Farms • Local restaurants • Grant County Cooperative Extension • Community Youth Building Project • New Mexico Youth Conservation Corps • New Mexico Recycling Coalition • EPA Sustainable Management of Food Program
Costs and/or resources needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time to establish structure, and recruit members • Funding to pay for manager
Possible funding sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SBA • Grant County Cooperative Extension • Crowd funding (Kickstart or Indiegogo) • USDA Rural Cooperative Development Grant Program

Action 3.2: Identify the rules and regulations that are barriers to cottage food businesses and identify best practices for working within regulations (e.g., for food handling).

What this is and why it is important	Food safety regulations are usually very strict and can often pose a barrier to new entrepreneurs who want to prepare and/or process food for sale. Understanding the rules and regulations that serve as barriers can reveal where community education and support could help would-be entrepreneurs overcome the barriers, can prevent untrue myths from discouraging would-be entrepreneurs, and can suggest what local rules and regulations (if any) might be changed to facilitate new business development.
Measures of success	The number of successful cottage businesses that flourish in our community
Timeframe	By the end of November
Lead	Francisca Reyes, Western New Mexico University
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FDA Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition • USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service • Grant County Cooperative Extension • New Mexico Department of Agriculture • New Mexico Environment Department • Legislators
Costs and/or resources needed	Time

Action 3.2: Identify the rules and regulations that are barriers to cottage food businesses and identify best practices for working within regulations (e.g., for food handling).

Possible funding sources N/A

Action 3.3: Tap into or create an entrepreneur mentorship program with existing entrepreneurs.

What this is and why it is important	A mentorship program could help make Silver City a place that attracts and nurtures entrepreneurs by offering a supportive environment where new entrepreneurs can talk through ideas and learn from experts about how to avoid mistakes. Understanding the challenges of successful entrepreneurs can help remove some of the fear of taking on new financial and professional risks and provide inspiration to move ahead. Through storytelling and networking events, emerging entrepreneurs can gain skills and trusted advisors and peers to become more confident in taking the risk in starting a business.
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of proteges • Number of mentors • Number of and attendance at mentoring programs and activities
Timeframe	August 6, 2018
Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Otto Khera • Linda Aineian • Francisca Reyes, Western New Mexico University • Christine Logan
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Western New Mexico University • Local high schools • Small Business Development Center at Western New Mexico University • Chamber of Commerce • Small Business Administration
Costs and/or resources needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time to set up the program and recruit participants • Money for recruiting materials, advertising
Possible funding sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • McCune Foundation • Grant County Healthy Kids • USDA 4-H Program • Small Business Administration • Western New Mexico University • Crowdfunding

Additional Goal 3 Action Ideas

- Build a worker-owned cooperative food businesses to share responsibility and risk that prevents entrepreneurial movement.

- Create a new business for small growers with a cooperatively owned mobile unit (covered in Goal 1).
- Create opportunities in schools for youth to learn about and experience entrepreneurship.
- Provide comprehensive technical assistance to food entrepreneurs with hand-holding through the process.
- Create a large-scale packing and bottling plant to brand local and native foods for export.
- Coordinate logistics and transportation for entrepreneurs to bring food to market.
- Establish a kitchen incubator.
- Connect entrepreneurs with business resource network and programs.
- Create a beekeeping cooperative to share labor and resources through a high school entrepreneur boot camp.

Goal 4: Include underserved community members in local food system planning and decision making.

Workshop attendees expressed a desire to be inclusive and to ensure that all community members can benefit from the new economic opportunities created by developing a strong local food system, particularly those individuals who have the greatest need. To achieve this goal, several actions were identified to help existing organizations listen to and address the concerns of historically underrepresented members of the community so that everyone feels included in the planning of the local food system and welcome to take part in new activities and initiatives. Through focusing on listening, identifying community needs, and remaining open to new and innovative methods of engagement, attendees identified a path forward to making progress and addressing this longstanding need in the community.

Action 4.1: Expand the Grant County Food Policy Council membership to include more underrepresented groups, and hold meetings in more geographic locations to attract underrepresented groups to the meetings.

What this is and why it is important	By developing partnerships among leaders in all segments of the community, the food system network can more effectively reach out to underserved populations. Through community involvement, community needs and relationship building will be addressed. The Grant County Food Policy Council currently meets every few months. Expanding representation on the council to under-represented groups could be the easiest way to increase community involvement and ensure diverse views are included in food system planning. In addition, the council currently occasionally changes meeting venues. This could be done with an eye toward meeting in places where underrepresented groups are most likely to be able to and want to participate.
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of new participants on the council from underrepresented groups • Overall attendance at the meetings • Policy changes that reflect the new participation
Timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extend invitations to a broader set of people for October 2018 meeting • Ongoing effort to begin ASAP
Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ben Rasmussen (Southwest New Mexico Food Hub)

Action 4.1: Expand the Grant County Food Policy Council membership to include more underrepresented groups, and hold meetings in more geographic locations to attract underrepresented groups to the meetings.

Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Health Food Policy Council The Commons (with capacity building) Future Farmers of America Grant County Cooperative Extension Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlan (MECHA) at Western New Mexico University
Costs and/or resources needed	Time
Possible funding sources	N/A

Action 4.2: Establish and improve access and collaboration with local schools (farm to school programs). Identify inspirational teachers/mentors toward development of food-related skillsets.

What this is and why it is important	There were no post-its for this action
Measures of success	
Timeframe	
Lead	
Supporting cast	
Costs and/or resources needed	
Possible funding sources	

Additional Goal 4 Actions

- Provide bus service to the farmers market on Saturdays.
- Interview successful local entrepreneurs from underserved communities to learn best practices.
- Fund and outreach position.
- Techniques to improve engagement:
 - Provide outreach materials in English and Spanish.
 - Facilitate meetings at different locations.
 - Advertise in places that underserved residents visit.
- Programming and education
 - Offer nutrition classes at local churches and sports groups for youth.
 - Offer tours of the garden at the Commons to schools, 4-H club, Boy Scouts.
 - Coordinate with Western New Mexico University Service Learning (e.g. freshman biology, sociology) to deliver educational programming to other groups.

Goal 5: Strengthen Grant County as a food destination with downtown Silver City as a focal point.

Silver City has a walkable and compact Main Street business district that is a key destination for residents and visitors of Grant County and the region. Downtown Silver City provides multiple restaurants, retail stores, and hotels that attract tourists and serve local residents. While it has many successful businesses and restaurants, there are opportunities to create, strengthen, and/or expand food-oriented events and assets that could help brand the area as a destination for people looking to experience authentic, local food, further drawing people to the area who will participate in Silver City's and Grant County's local economy. The downtown farmers market is an important asset towards this end, so actions to strengthen the market are part of this goal.

Action 5.1: Create an event committee to sponsor annual event(s) related to food. Include representatives from underrepresented groups.

What this is and why it is important	A committee would be a collaborative effort, ensuring broad support among downtown businesses, residents, and supporters for any planned events. Including representatives of segments of the population that have often not been included in event planning can help make sure events appeal to everyone and increase participation. A committee would foster better communication and consensus on how to increase economic vitality downtown.
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A committee exists with representatives from farmers, restaurants, under-represented communities, downtown merchants, and farmers market vendors • The committee meets on a regular basis • The committee has taken viable steps towards an event
Timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invitations to join by end of September • First meeting by end of November • First event by Earth Day
Lead	To get set up: Charmaine Wait (Silver City MainStreet) and Andrea Warner (Farmers Market manager)
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mike Madigan (Silver City Food Co-op) • Eric Lynch (The Veggie Pedaler) • Kristin Lundgren (The Commons) • Revel restaurant owners • George Farmer (Axle Canyon Preserve) • Ben Rasmussen (Southwest New Mexico Food Hub)
Costs and/or resources needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time to set up committee • Money to put on events

Action 5.1: Create an event committee to sponsor annual event(s) related to food. Include representatives from underrepresented groups.

Possible funding sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town and Country Garden club • Single Socks • GoFund Me • For-profit sponsors • Raffle at events • Silent auctions • Silver City lodger's tax
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Action 5.2: Compile a list of food system assets in Grant County and Silver City to post on various websites, e.g. the city, county, visitor center, etc.

What this is and why it is important	A consolidated list of food system assets would be a better way to connect existing growers and consumers, encourage new growers and consumers, and educate residents. A list could help capitalize on the growing interest in local foods across the county to attract tourists.
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having it posted online • Number of clicks • Number of entities contacted through webpage
Timeframe	Posted by May 2019
Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frances Reyes (Western New Mexico University) • Business department at Western New Mexico University
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Western New Mexico University student – for-credit project • Cari Lemon (Grant County Community Health Council) • Kendra Milligan (SW Center for Health Innovation) • Ben Rasmussen (Southwest New Mexico Food Hub) • Mike Madigan (Silver City Food Co-op) • Chamber of Commerce • New Mexico Farmers Marketing Association
Costs and/or resources needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff/volunteer time
Possible funding sources	Web hosting costs covered by existing page hosts

Action 5.3: Expand farmers market paid staff hours so the market can continue to grow and thrive.

What this is and why it is important	<p>The current arrangement with a part-time market manager does not allow the market to expand beyond its current offerings. More staff capacity would allow for additional outreach to growers, so the number of vendors could be increased. Additional hours would also enable the farmers market manager to coordinate events with Silver City MainStreet and downtown businesses. Strong leadership by the farmers market could also encourage more people to serve on event committees.</p> <p>An alternative would be to allow the current farmers market manager to spend less time staffing the farmers market table during market hours so more time could be spent on other activities to promote the market and run other market activities.</p>
Measures of success	30-hour/week position (for 10 months)
Timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin: ASAP • Goal: Funding secured by the end of 2019
Lead	Farmers Market managerial board
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Mexico Farmers Marketing Association • Silver City MainStreet- letter of support
Costs and/or resources needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time to search and apply for funding • Funding to pay for expanded hours
Possible funding sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Mexico Farmers Marketing Association • USDA Farmers Market Promotion Program • Local health care institutions

Action 5.4: Revise farmers market by-laws that prevent the sale of art and prepared foods to allow these types of vendors.

What this is and why it is important	<p>The current farmers market by-laws prevent vendors from selling hand-crafted arts or prepared foods, with the exception of allowing just one artisan. Allowing a greater diversity in vendor types at the market would strengthen the interest in the market and bring more consumers downtown. The change would also increase opportunities for artisans to sell their products, providing additional economic development.</p>
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handmade artisans allowed • Number of artisans participating • Handmade/homemade prepared foods
Timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin: ASAP • Completed by 2019 season
Lead	Andrea Warner

Action 5.4: Revise farmers market by-laws that prevent the sale of art and prepared foods to allow these types of vendors.

Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charmaine Wait (Silver City MainStreet) • New Mexico Farmers Marketing Association
Costs and/or resources needed	Time
Possible funding sources	N/A

Additional Goal 5 Actions

- Incorporate Main Street Plaza, a community education space.
- Develop a collaborative promotion between downtown merchants and the farmers market.
- Revitalize/rebuild San Vicente Chinese gardens.
- Publish ads and events in Edible Baja Arizona magazine.
- Evaluate what needs to be done to encourage more food truck businesses.

IMPLEMENTATION AND NEXT STEPS

During the post-workshop calls, steering committee members provided updates about relevant projects and initiatives.

- The National Center for Frontier Communities Food Hub was awarded a \$6,000 grant from United Way of Southern New Mexico to purchase food for the food pantries through the Hub to serve its dual purpose (serve farmers and serve food pantries). Half of it will go to purchase local food for the food pantry. In addition to the boxes that people are getting at the food pantry, they'd be able to get bulk-purchased food. The goal is to start adding things to those boxes that people can make meals from. Two of our locations have existing volunteers who have offered to help repack. Large shipments need to be split up into food boxes.
 - Additionally, the Food Hub has identified five new growers to add to the Food Hub network. The Food Hub has been sending out a weekly price list, as well, and recently began selling discounted produce to the Food Basket, a grocery store in Silver City, to make locally-grown produce available and accessible to people in the community.
 - The National Center for Frontier Communities also submitted a grant proposal for a shared cold storage space to support growers in the region.
- Silver City Main Street updated the downtown Silver City town and map, and put a leaf icon next to businesses using local food – featuring Revel, Corner Kitchen, and Silver City Food Coop. Hopefully, that will encourage more to use local food.
- Silver City hosted a successful Taste of Downtown event, and oversold tickets. The plan is to ramp it up next year and feature local foods.
- The Silver City Food Co-op has been busy planning for how best to use the new space. They are working on a community-wide survey, and beginning efforts to work with an architect to have some

drawings for their communications and decision-making moving forward. There have also been new conversations with the SW New Mexico COG and the NM Economic Development Association.

The steering committee also worked through the Community Action Plan action tables to further refine and prioritize the actions, and fill in missing pieces.

APPENDICES

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