



**LESLIE COUNTY
Downtown Revitalization
Project Summary
2020**

Community & Economic
Development Initiative of Kentucky

 College of Agriculture,
Food and Environment

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[Cover Image]

Student rendering of an overlook
concept for Hyden

PROJECT INTRODUCTION

04 Background

06 What is CEDIK?

07 Importance of Downtowns

08 Prioritizing Downtown

COMMUNITY DESIGN

14 What is Community Design?

16 Landscape Architecture Academic Studio

18 Student Recommendations

20 Hyden Heroes

22 Heart of Hyden

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

24 What is First Impressions?

26 First Impressions Overview

32 Final Recommendations

STAKEHOLDER NETWORKING

34 Coming Together

36 Downtown Stakeholder Team

DOWNTOWN INVESTMENTS

38 About

41 Mini Grants

43 Implementation Grant

PROJECT RECOMMENDATIONS

46 About

48 Project Recommendations

APPENDIX

60 Indicators of Downtown Success

66 County Data Profiles

PROJECT INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

In 2017, the Community and Economic Development Initiative of Kentucky (CEDIK) launched a three year, Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) grant from the POWER (Partnerships for Opportunity and Workforce and Economic Revitalization) Initiative. This grant funded a Downtown Revitalization Project in Kentucky's eight Promise Zone counties. These eight counties are Bell, Clay, Harlan, Knox, Leslie, Letcher, Perry and Whitley. Within these eight counties, twelve downtowns signed up to be a part of this project, including Corbin and Williamsburg, Kentucky.

Within the broad scope of this downtown revitalization project, CEDIK offered a wide range of programs and technical assistance, along with networking opportunities to address the unique challenges each community faces in regards to their respective downtowns. Every community was able to select services to best meet their needs. CEDIK also facilitated quarterly convenings to allow participating communities to share ideas, strategies and information vital to successful revitalization efforts in the region. Communities that participated in this project were then able to access grant money to fund projects in their downtowns in order to successfully move from a planning phase into direct action.



Memorial to the Hurricane Creek Mine Disaster

WHAT IS CEDIK?

The Community and Economic Development Initiative of Kentucky (CEDIK) emerged as a college level unit within the University of Kentucky's College of Agriculture, Food and Environment (CAFE) in 2010. The CAFE administration recognized the need for both an internal source of professional development and instruction for students and county Extension agents, as well as an external outreach mechanism for Kentucky communities with programming and research that focused on community and economic development. CEDIK's programming has dramatically expanded to meet the evolving nature of places and economies, as well as recognizing the intricacies of economic development. This Whitley County Downtown Revitalization Project Summary is an example of this evolution, exploring how quality and intentional design and planning initiatives can create a more economically resilient downtown.

CEDIK'S GOALS

- Provide research and information that supports community and economic development.
- Build the leadership and organizational capacity of peoples and communities.
- Support community decision-making and collaborative initiatives.
- Facilitate partnerships and networks that enable communities to thrive economically, physically and socially.
- Sustain CEDIK's organizational capacity to efficiently and effectively accomplish its mission and vision.

IMPORTANCE OF DOWNTOWNS

Downtowns are iconic and powerful symbols for a city and often contain the most culturally relevant landmarks, distinctive features and unique neighborhoods in a city. Given that most downtowns are generally the oldest part of a city, they offer rare insights into their city's past, present and potential future.

Following de-industrialization and the growth of suburban development in the middle of the last century, many cities across the country forgot about their downtowns. During this period private investment in downtowns stagnated while it increased dramatically on the outskirts of cities. This happened throughout the western world, from Glasgow, Kentucky to Glasgow, Scotland. In Whitley County, this manifested in the suburban style of development often found adjacent to Interstate 75. Here, national big box retailers and



[Image]
Historic mixed use buildings in
downtown Hyden

fast food restaurants opened, drawing the businesses and services that were once a staple of 'going to town' out into the periphery. This reduced foot traffic and the critical mass necessary to support a vibrant and economically resilient downtown and drove future development to the car-centric periphery. Consequently, new developments featured national retail stores rather than the locally based and owned stores that tend to be staples of downtowns. While these new stores offered much needed jobs it often came at the expense of the local downtown landscape and economy.

PRIORITIZING DOWNTOWN

Downtowns are complex places. Physically they are often the oldest part of a city, making redevelopment of infrastructure and buildings challenging. Culturally, many people have memories of 'going to town' and what the downtown looked like when it was bustling, influencing their perception of what the downtown should be in the future. Additionally, downtowns are where most civic, judicial and medical services are located. Each of the elements that have historically represented the important role and function of a downtown are discussed below.

CIVIC

Civic spaces in downtowns bring people together and nurture the larger community. Civic spaces are more than the aesthetic center of the town where public events take place; they allow cultural, economic and social exchanges to occur. Consequently, downtowns that do not have a civic space tend to feel less connected to area residents. As a result, communities without civic spaces are most likely to experience decline in the various forms of community health & wellness (socially, economically, culturally, and environmentally.)

RELIGION AND CULTURE

Vibrant downtowns foster the exchange of religion and culture through various daily interactions and public activities (farmers markets, festivals, etc). As a long-term result, people are more likely to stay connected, develop broader relationships and adopt healthy practices as they integrate other people's culture and/or religion into their everyday life.

MEDICAL

A prospering city and downtown will likely attract new residents, and with the increased residents, the demand for larger hospitals and other medical services will increase to meet demand. New medical facilities to meet the demands of patients will create jobs encouraging medical professionals to move into or stay in the area.

COMMERCIAL/SHOPPING

Downtown spaces are where people are most likely going to be throughout the day. Shops will emerge in the area to meet the public's increased demand for goods and services, leading to higher profits and increased job opportunities.

ENTERTAINMENT

Downtown areas have a civic center where public activities for entertainment can occur. After many successful functions in the area, locals will brainstorm more events to have in the civic center of the downtown area.

SOCIAL

The social aspects of downtown can consist of a town hall, cafe/ diner and even parks/plazas. Some events can also create social atmospheres, like festivals. These areas bring people together for socialization.

RESIDENTIAL

As the downtown renaissance occurs in communities across the country, people will be more likely to move downtown because it is close to their place of employment and in proximity to a variety of resources. This has led to a higher demand for residential spaces in downtown areas, which is a key component of a vibrant and walkable communities

FINANCIAL

Downtowns are historically where a city's central financial hub is located, serving the community as well as local government. These financial services play a key part in the welfare and longevity of the broader community.

EMPLOYMENT

High population densities typically found in thriving downtown areas attract businesses. As a result, there will be an increased demand for workers to meet the growing needs of residents.

EDUCATIONAL

Downtown areas allow people from various backgrounds to engage with each other on a special level. For children, this creates friendly, hands-on learning opportunities to discover other cultures in their community. This socialization can also foster place identity and community connection.

[Image Right]
View towards central Hyden from a
downtown storefront

WHY INVEST IN DOWNTOWN?

Downtowns have a significant intrinsic value not easily replicated in new developments. The historic density and concentration of assets, people and businesses make downtowns natural hubs for jobs and tax revenue. Downtowns illuminate and showcase a community's culture and provide insights on its historic identity. Healthy and productive downtowns also have the opportunity to generate a high tax revenue per acre due to the mix and density of their use. Downtowns can be notably economically productive and as a result investments in downtown have the potential to generate great returns. Over time, downtowns have proven to be quite resilient because of the entanglement of built assets, ingrained memories and diversity of uses.



Downtowns are for everyone and often their vibrancy is associated with the density of small businesses and the foot traffic supporting them. Investment in revitalization can create jobs, increase property values, improve quality of life and attract new visitors and residents. Downtowns are also important investments for industrial attraction. Many sites are selected based on the quality of life for employees and a downtown's cultural and recreational amenities - not just labor, schools, housing and infrastructure. Industries want to be located in unique and authentic places where employees can be happy and healthy.

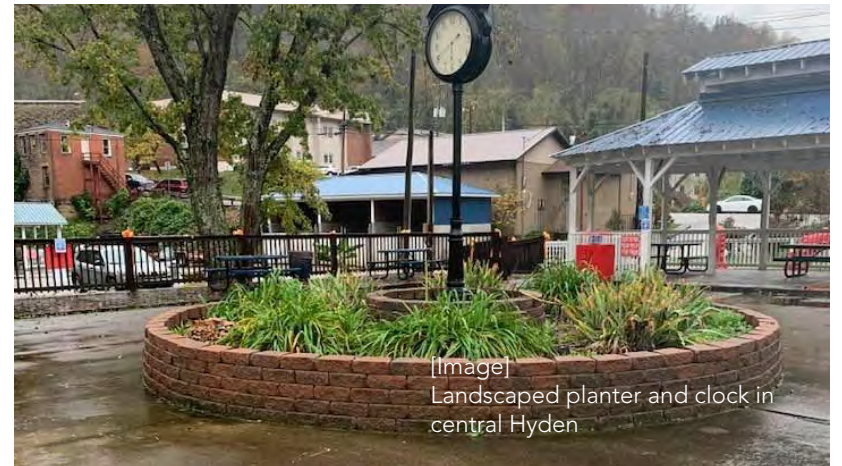
Downtown investments are as diverse as downtowns themselves. For example, investments can be made in accessibility, public art, building facades or parks and green spaces (to suggest a few) but they all serve a unique purpose while collectively contributing to the vibrancy and value of downtown.



[Image]
Presentation regarding a new mural in downtown Hyden

Parks and green spaces are vital in providing a good quality of life, promoting health and wellness, and contributing to economic growth even though they are rarely considered as important as infrastructure that serves community needs like water, sewage and electricity.

Downtowns are multifaceted systems and the investments we make to support revitalization efforts are increasingly broad as well. There is no singular way to measure downtown revitalization success over time. Rather, we suggest a broad set of indicators similar to the 2014 University of Illinois Extension 'Downtown Success Indicators' found in the appendix. This publication was used to provide insights on how to begin broadening how we measure revitalization progress. The provided indicators and metrics increase our understanding of, and measure the success of, downtown investments.



[Image]
Landscaped planter and clock in central Hyden

WHAT IS COMMUNITY DESIGN?

Community design focuses on the creation and implementation of places for people. This process promotes change to the built environment from the neighborhood to regional scale, and aims to meet community needs through participatory decision-making at all levels.

One of the more innovative ways CEDIK achieves its mission is through the use of community design. The value of design and planning is often overlooked during economic development and revitalization efforts, especially in rural communities. This project seeks to challenge that. These efforts began in 2012, with the hiring of a faculty member in the Department of Landscape Architecture (UKLA) who partners with CEDIK through the Cooperative Extension Services. Deploying these efforts through Cooperative Extension, CEDIK has developed a library of publications centered around spatial design and planning elements for communities to learn from and incorporate themselves. These are available through the CEDIK website (<https://cedik.ca.uky.edu/>).

The following section presents a summary of community design efforts undertaken as part of the Downtown Revitalization Project.



Public concert in Hyden's Riverfront Park pavilion

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE ACADEMIC STUDIO

OVERVIEW

In Fall 2019, UK's Department of Landscape Architecture was deployed to Leslie County to plan, design and recommend conceptual spatial design solutions for a sustainable community. This semester-long project included developing relevant wayfinding systems in and around Hyden and Leslie County's streetscapes, parks and public and open spaces. The design solutions were to complement already existing efforts and further potential endeavors.

The broad goals for this project included developing conceptual and practical ideas by:

- Documenting research relevant to streetscapes, parks, public spaces, open spaces, trails, greenways, wayfinding, etc.
- Thinking creatively and generating design ideas relevant at the county, local, downtown, and site scales.
- Demonstrating design skills that are visionary and phased out, but also practical.
- Communicating clear and professional level graphics to clients and intended beneficiaries.
- Working effectively as a team to present professional level products.
- Engaging with community members during the workshops and other methods of engagement opportunities.

[Image Right]
Landscape architecture students tour
Hyden with local partners

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The objectives for the project were to research and propose design solutions while also organizing and facilitating a community design workshop. Students documented and clearly communicated all phases of the project including community input and feedback. The community design workshop was held in Hyden on Saturday, September 21th. After the workshop, students proposed evidence-based plans and design solutions that addressed the community's needs and goals. As part of a longer-term implementation strategy, the class also provided further implementation and management recommendations. The student designers researched standards and case studies relevant to the planning and designing of streetscapes, parks, public spaces, open space design, trails, trail systems, wayfinding, land use, etc. Specifically, everyone researched, analyzed, planned, designed, and presented appropriate design suggestions in collaboration with community members from Hyden and Leslie County.



STUDENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Students' design proposals addressed small to large-scale goals, objectives and designs complementing the community's long-term objectives. At a minimum, students were expected to approach and provide creative yet practical plans and designs applicable to the region. The following was a preliminary list of needs and potential project ideas from the community at large. The class expanded/refined the scope of work upon agreement with stakeholders.



[Image Right]
Landscape architecture students
hosting a community engagement
event in Hyden



[Image Right]
Landscape architecture students
present their findings to community
members in Hyden

ELEMENTS EVALUATED

- Inventory bio-physical, socio-economic, historical, and cultural information of the community and context
- Analyze the opportunities and challenges of the community's geographic location at the regional and local scales
- Research precedents, standards, requirements and guidelines at a minimum for the following topics: streetscapes, parks, public spaces, open spaces, trails, greenways, wayfinding, walkability, accessibility and inclusive design among others
- Facilitate the workshop sessions with select activities on-site
- Identify expanded public space networks or future connectivity opportunities in the broader study areas based on connecting to larger/existing established destinations such as tourism resources in the region
- Identify local cultural features, historic sites, existing trails, potential trail connections, etc., that can be complemented with wayfinding systems
- Develop conceptual public space network plans for the study area including designs for streetscapes, parks, public spaces, trail systems, inclusive design considerations and unique challenges discovered during the workshop
- Select focus areas from the developed public space network plans and further develop site specific detail designs with a variety of perspectives

As a class project, 3 city-wide and 1 county-wide proposals, 11 case studies, and 11 focus area design proposals were presented to the community.

The following four pages represent the findings and recommendations from two of the student groups.

PROJECT 1: HYDEN HEROES

Hyden Heroes reflects all the “heroes” that have been a part of the community. This master plan was designed to enhance the economic sustainability of the community, along with teaching and informing about the cultural history. Multiple points of interest in the plan give a sense of many aspects of the town’s broad historical significance. By enhancing these areas, the community and visitors will have an informative area where they can learn about Hyden’s rich history.

The potential economic benefits presented in this master plan includes the existing recreational activities along with a proposed zipline, flowing along the mountainside, from the Biggerstaff Trailhead down to Kate Ireland Drive. The master plan also features an improved streetscape throughout the downtown area. This will improve the pedestrian experience while better connecting the unique culture points in the area, where local heroes are honored and remembered. As more people spend their time exploring the unique town of Hyden, economic activity will naturally increase.

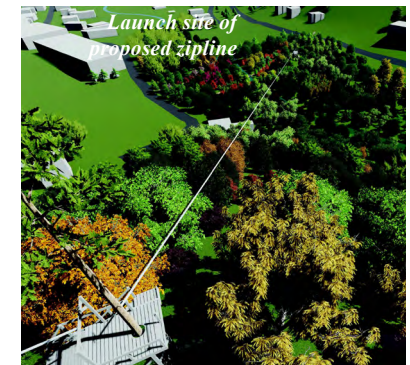
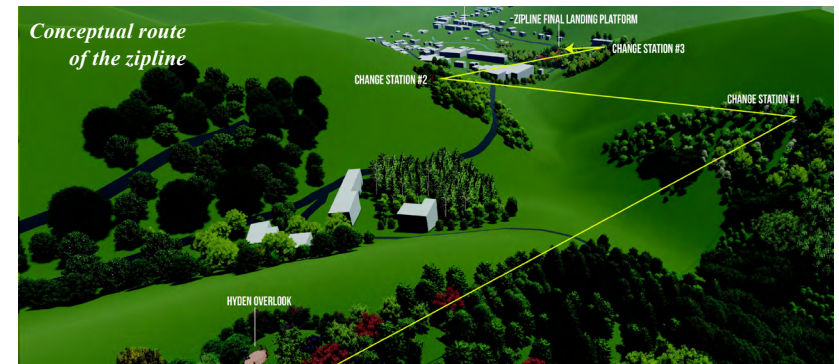
GOAL

Activate Hyden to attract locals and visitors.

OBJECTIVES

- Design a new adventure recreation activity.
- Soften Main Street by incorporating more natural materials.
- Connect and expand upon cultural landmarks downtown and county wide.

This work was prepared by Carson Ann Adams and Kaleb Matoszka.



PROJECT 2: HEART OF HYDEN

INTRODUCTION

Main Street in downtown Hyden is a primary state thoroughfare that cuts directly through a scenic Appalachian valley. This street is by both pedestrian and vehicular traffic (including semi-trucks) throughout the middle of the afternoon.

MAIN STREET ANALYSIS

Through an analysis of Main Street, an equal amount of opportunities and constraints were observed. This small stretch of Main Street lacks a sense of scale due to the width of the road. There are no trees along the street, which helps makes it feel very open and exposed. The assessment showed a lack of proper ADA accessible sidewalks as well as a lack of connecting sidewalks. The benefit of having a connection between sidewalks is that it increases the use of pedestrian foot traffic and allows pedestrians to move throughout the site more effectively. While closely watching Hyden's EarthCam, pedestrians seemed to ignore the existing crosswalk, and instead, they would jaywalk from the library to the Subway across the street. Examining these details has allowed us to create a thoughtful master plan for the streetscape along Main Street.



GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

To revitalize the streetscape, we support creating areas along the street for vegetation and a tree canopy which would improve the aesthetic of the downtown area while also acting as an visually pleasing barrier between vehicular and pedestrian traffic. Improving existing sidewalks and implementing new sidewalks will also help to ensure pedestrian safety. These changes will increase opportunities to explore the rich heritage of this historic downtown.

This work was prepared by Harrison Knifley, Grant M. Lewis and Gabriella Evans.



FIRST IMPRESSIONS

WHAT IS FIRST IMPRESSIONS?

First Impressions is a structured assessment program that enables communities to learn about the first impression they convey to outsiders. It offers a fresh perspective on the appearance, services and infrastructure of each community. Volunteer teams undertake unannounced, one-day visits, record their observations, and give constructive feedback to the community. Their photos and responses are then compiled and presented back to the community by a CEDIK representative. In addition, the program offers suggestions and resources to address the areas identified for potential improvement. The knowledge gained through this program is intended to serve as a basis for community action.

First Impressions was developed by Andy Lewis, University of Wisconsin Extension Associate Professor, and James Schneider, Grant County (WI) Economic Development Director. CEDIK has adapted the First Impressions Program to meet the needs of Kentucky communities.

The following four pages represent a summary of First Impressions in Leslie County undertaken as part of the Downtown Revitalization Project.



Historic marker for the Frontier Nursing Services

FIRST IMPRESSIONS OVERVIEW

This program coordinates anonymous visits to your community by professionals in community and economic development, small business owners, community leaders and more, depending upon your specific community assessment needs. Analysis includes detailed feedback from Internet search engines, social media platforms and in-person experiences. Visitors document their experience and interactions with community members.

PROCESS

Visits to Leslie County were conducted by 11 team members on both weekdays and weekends to capture a variety of activity within the community. The Leslie First Impressions team consisted of small business owners, young professionals, traveling retirees and community development professionals. Overall, conditions were favorable for visiting and exploring the roads, small communities, parks and businesses within Leslie County. While quotations in this report should not be considered exhaustive, they do provide a valuable snapshot of a visitor's perspective in Leslie County from a variety of ages, life experiences and interests.



[Image]
Artistic signage incorporated into railings in downtown Hyden

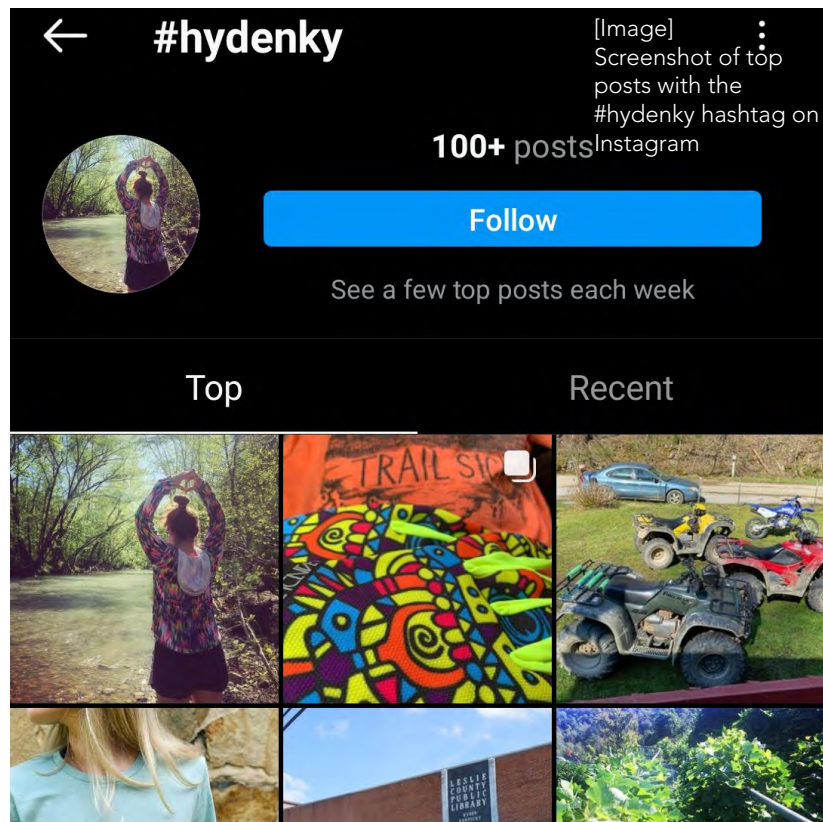
WEB PRESENCE

Prior to visiting Hyden, assessors researched the community on the internet, visiting official and non-official sites from search engines, restaurant and hotel reviews and even school and newspaper outlets. The majority of visitor impressions regarding web presence were positive. Several assessors noted the strengths of the city website. Detailed comments were made about the nice formatting and picture quality of the page. One reviewer wrote "The Leslie County site had a cool video and Hyden had a neat personal message from the Mayor." Assessors noted that a tab with a listing of things to do in Hyden would be helpful for visitors who are trying to plan a trip. Reviewers noted that when searching for online information on Hyden, the official city website was not always the first search result. They also commented on the "Photo Gallery" tab and enjoyed the photos highlighted there. This helped multiple assessors choose to visit the Hurricane Creek Mine Disaster Memorial.

Some assessors experienced difficulty with broken links and clunky layout while navigating web pages on mobile devices and offered suggestions for improvement. They also noted that while the web pages were attractive, some had out-of-date event tabs so they were unable to easily see updated calendars for community events. Assessors also analyzed Triadvisor, Urbanspoon and Yelp reviews to identify strengths and weaknesses. All assessors reported planning their trip and selecting locations to visit based on reviews on these sites. Unfortunately, there were not many reviews listed online. One volunteer reported, "Yelp was not super helpful, most of the restaurants listed weren't even in Hyden or Leslie County." A suggestion would be to encourage patrons of local businesses to write reviews of their favorites online to help attract visitors to those locations.

On social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, reviewers had largely varied responses. Some observed high traffic for certain organizations on certain platforms.

Reviewers also observed that many small businesses were not adequately represented on social media, suggesting opportunity for community social media trainings to support business owners. By training business owners how to improve their web presence, the entire town's web presence would benefit. Overall, reviews for the web presence were positive.



The hashtag #HydenKY had positive posts, but many believed this was an untapped resource for Hyden's social media presence. Others felt social media presence could improve considerably, and encouraged the community make note of pages that are outdated and encourage page owners to increase activity to improve presence. Reviewers also suggested identifying and encouraging a few hashtags to be used consistently by the community to highlight positives of Hyden

COMMUNITY VISITS

During the Quick Pass, reviewers overwhelmingly had positive impressions of the natural beauty of Leslie County and charm of Hyden. Some struggled with navigation due to the limited amount of signage. This could be vital given that many lose cellular service as they enter the region. Assessors specifically noted that they enjoyed the "Welcome Home" and "Heart of the Mountains" light pole banners in downtown Hyden. After completing the Quick Pass, assessors returned to locations that caught their attention and began detailed exploration and documentation of the community.

Highlights from these responses include the beauty of the mountains environment, and the kindness of the residents of Hyden. One wrote "One observation is the congeniality of every single person we spoke with. It was quite remarkable. We were clearly out-of-towners and everyone treated us with gracious hospitality." Another remarked that the citizenry was happy to answer any questions they had and seemed very proud of their community and eager to engage with visitors. Assessors also noted the attractive, easily navigable sidewalks and ironworks throughout Hyden. All visitors noted the availability and ease of parking in all the city. They valued the free public parking lots, and the ability to walk from business to business. There is no visitor's center, so many volunteers headed to

City Hall to get more information. Several reported how easy it was to access the Mayor and how she gave helpful recommendations.

There is evident pride in the history of the Frontier Nursing School and Mary Breckenridge. One reviewer wrote “The bridge leading to the sculpture of Mary Breckinridge is an artistic delight and the sculpture is beautiful and captures her essence.” Others noted that the town cherishes the Osbourne Brothers and the School of Bluegrass. More than one reported how impressed they were with the Hurricane Creek Mine Disaster Memorial. Some also observed a disconnect between tourism and the local residents, and felt there could be more promotion of events and festivals to draw more people out.

The Riverfront Park had a positive influence, as visitors noticed it seems like a community that cares for its youth and resident well-being. They also noticed that there may be opportunity for more water recreation activities, such as kayaking or canoeing in the river. Other natural resources, such as the red buds were heavily advertised and assessors felt that the identity of the community was embedded with the red buds and mountains.



They spent most of their time at the local restaurants and shops. Visitors noted a limited amount of local dining opportunities but enjoyed the Red Light Café downtown, Mario’s Pizza, Goofy’s, and Blue Castle. As for lodging, volunteers truly enjoyed the Wendover Bed and Breakfast Inn. One wrote, “The view was picturesque and the breakfast was delicious!” Another reviewer commented that they wished the Wendover had a stronger web presence because they would have made arrangements to stay had they known. Many suggested that because of the few hotels there may be an opportunity for AirBnBs in Hyden.

After several hours exploring Leslie County, assessors documented their lasting impressions on assets, challenges and opportunities they envision for the community, and make recommendations for further appeal to visitors that travel to the area.

[Image Left]
Bobby Osborne
Pavilion in
Hyden

[Image Below]
Go-cart track in
downtown Hyden



FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the feedback compiled from visits to Leslie County, the following suggestions are recommended for future opportunities:

Continue to Invest in the Riverway of Downtown

Visitors noticed significant invasive species and debris along the riverway, although the water looks clear and inviting. Consider strategies to continue to clean sections of the river and restore the banks to their natural state.

Increase Outdoor Tourism Opportunities

Visitors were impressed with the outdoor offerings in the community, and encourage continued development in this area. They felt there was enough for an afternoon, but need more activities to draw for a full overnight/weekend stay. Have printed information downtown to easily point visitors to the new hiking trailhead since cell phone coverage for internet research and GPS navigation is limited.

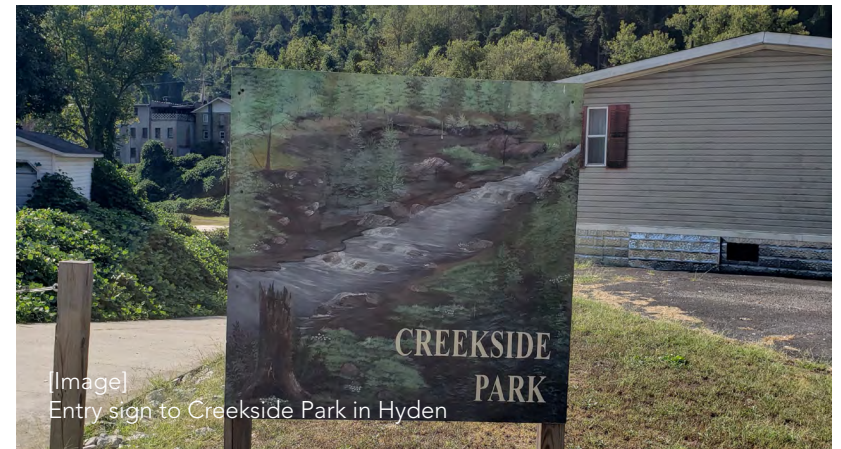
Develop an Online Branding Coalition to Improve Web Presence

All visitors favorably reviewed the city and county sites, but still experienced challenges with mobile layout and outdated events calendars. Consider forming a coalition to identify strategies to actively address and maintain web presence, and begin branding social media pages to promote the positives of Hyden. Consider a local “review” campaign to encourage local residents to write reviews on Yelp, Tripadvisor, and Urban Spoon to increase online reviews for visitors to see.

SUMMARY OF EFFORTS

After compiling the above information into a full-length report, a CEDIK representative presented the findings to Leslie County stakeholders in an open community forum in October of 2018. Stakeholders in attendance included elected officials, chamber members, bank representatives, youth, and Extension agents.

After reviewing the Community Assessment Report, attendees then participated in a CEDIK facilitated community forum to identify action items and priorities to act upon the information received. Vicki Boggs, County Extension Agent for 4H/Youth Development, stated, “this could prompt phenomenal change for Leslie County.” Several subsequent projects in the downtown revitalization efforts for Leslie County were inspired by the groundwork laid through feedback and collaboration gained from the First Impressions Community Assessment.

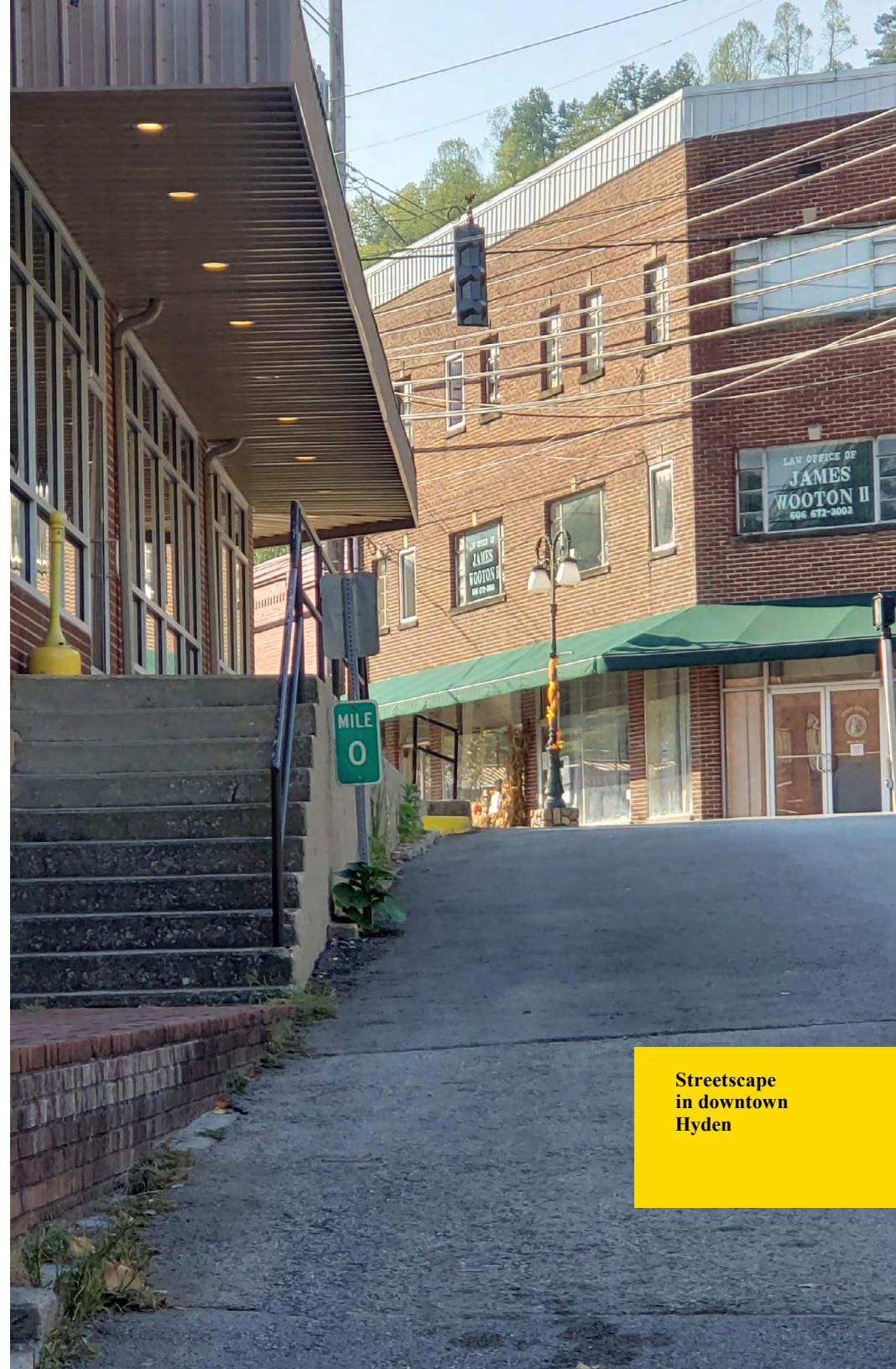


[Image]
Entry sign to Creekside Park in Hyden

STAKEHOLDER NETWORKING

COMING TOGETHER

Downtown revitalization takes more than a single person's best intentions. It requires a collective effort involving many people working towards mutual goals. More times than not, the process starts with a single person or organization investing their time and attempting to address an issue they've identified as the most important. Any process can begin with an individual vision for change, but cultivating shared ownership and positive results requires a deeper commitment and understanding of the connections between the community's assets, challenges, and vision for the future. This deep connection and understanding is connections and understanding are at the heart of downtown stakeholder networking.



**Streetscape
in downtown
Hyden**

DOWNTOWN STAKEHOLDER TEAM

Each participating community in the Promise Zone Downtown Revitalization project was led by a local stakeholder team representing active organizations and the downtown's diverse constituency. The varying perspectives of team members resulted in more diverse solutions being drawn upon. Teams were composed of representatives from local government, chambers of commerce, Main Street organizations, local business owners, tourism organizations, downtown managers/staff, historical societies, county extension agents, community foundations, health departments, local colleges, financial institutions and issues focused nonprofits.

Quarterly convenings provided a dedicated space and time for downtown stakeholders to come together to share, collaborate and inspire each other. These rotating meetings were hosted in different communities as a way to showcase local efforts and bring attention to the stakeholder's collective and shared interests. Convenings often included concurrent sessions providing technical assistance on topics like walkability, hosting film productions, historic preservation, data analysis/collection (intercept survey methods), grant writing and more, but also provided dedicated space for local updates and sharing.

Convenings included panels composed of local partners, spotlight presentations on local efforts and exercises aimed at illuminating shared regional assets and visions. These networking opportunities facilitated the pollination of ideas and in many cases led to communities adopting similar programs they heard others share. For example, nearly every community was inspired by Pineville's local development incentive programs, Harlan's inventory and reinvestment program for vacant or underutilized

buildings and Williamsburg's inspiring story of the River Fog Park enhancements and subsequent local festival planned in its space.

Downtown stakeholders in Hyden were not able to host a quarterly convening on site. However, their participation in regional convenings over the course of the project informed the design of their own weeklong public engagement event kicking off downtown engagement efforts. Stakeholders understood that achieving meaningful results required developing a broad community vision informed by real assets and challenges. They prioritized early investments to cultivate a broader base of committed constituents, champions and leaders. Hyden adopted a number of experiences from the regional convenings they attended into their local kickoff event. For example attendees participated in a walking tour to inventory often overlooked assets and joined in nightly discussions about available technical assistance programs. Just as regional partners were able to collaborate and learn from each other at regional convenings, the local stakeholders in Hyden were able to amplify local networking through the lens of downtown revitalization, economic development and tourism by adopting processes from their regional networking experiences.

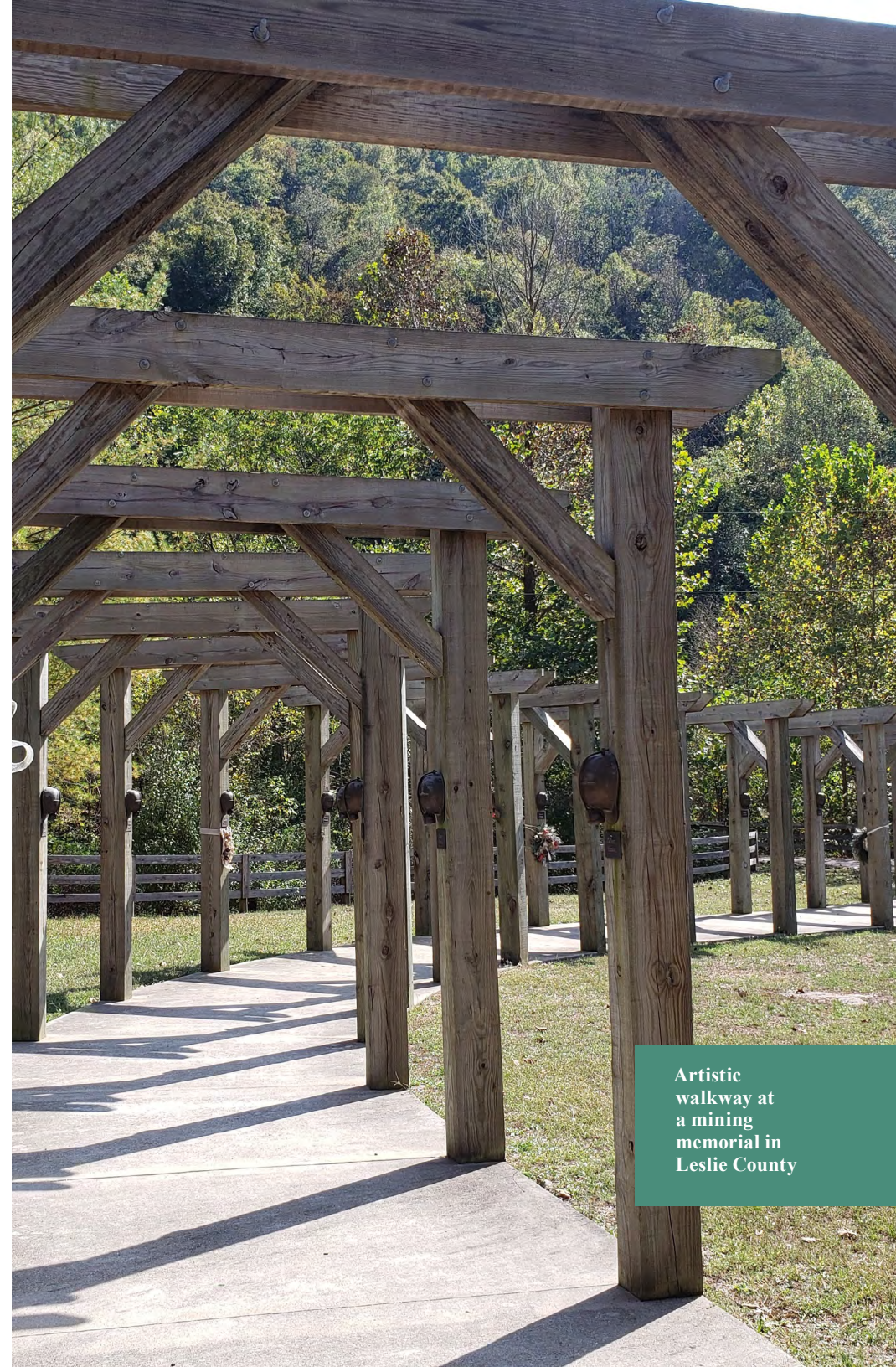


DOWNTOWN INVESTMENTS

About

Participating Promise Zone downtown stakeholder teams that utilized available programing like the First Impressions Program, Business Retention and Expansion Program and community design planning were eligible to apply for funding to implement at least one strategy from their downtown revitalization engagement. Communities accessed two cycles of grant funding to support implementation.

The first funding opportunity was a mini grant to initiate efforts often illuminated by the First Impressions report. These early mini grants acted as catalytic projects providing pathways for broader community engagement and collaboration. Stakeholder teams accessed larger implementation grants as more programs were deployed leading to a more firm vision of the necessary strategies required to move revitalization efforts forward. All applications were reviewed by a regional committee composed of individuals from CEDIK, Kentucky Main Street Program and Foundation for Appalachian Kentucky. The Foundation for Appalachian Kentucky executed agreements with each community and provided fiduciary responsibility.



Artistic
walkway at
a mining
memorial in
Leslie County

PUBLIC – PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

The reliance on public funds to support long-term economic development is not a winning strategy and we considered these POWER funds as an effort to re-energize long-term solutions in the region. Part of our overall strategy is to amplify the impacts of public-private partnerships and local foundations. The Foundation for Appalachian Kentucky, based in Hazard, Kentucky has been instrumental in providing philanthropic leadership throughout the region. In addition to supporting the creation of a number of affiliated funds they have continued to build local capacity and facilitate community collaborations and charitable giving.

The Leslie County Community Foundation exists to ensure a sound future for our community through the building of endowed funds and sustainable grant making in Leslie County. In addition to local affiliate funds, and in partnership with the Kentucky Promise Zone coordinator, a new, regional, community fund called the Upper Cumberland Community Foundation (UCCF) was established to transform eastern Kentucky through charitable giving, community involvement and strategic partnerships throughout Kentucky's Upper Cumberland counties of Bell, Clay, Knox and Whitley. Local philanthropic organizations like the Foundation for Appalachian Kentucky and its affiliated funds like the Leslie County Community Foundation and UCCF will continue to play an important role, fostering local collaborations to address place-based community and economic development challenges.

MINI GRANTS - HYDEN

The Leslie County Community Foundation, in partnership with Hyden-Leslie County Chamber of Commerce and the City of Hyden received funds to launch a weeklong community revitalization kickoff event. The series was designed to showcase the community's assets and engage its residents to create a renewed sense of purpose and urgency around downtown revitalization. Each evening focused on a different local priority and resulted in broader public engagement in downtown revitalization efforts being undertaken by downtown stakeholders.

OUTCOMES

Generate a renewed sense of purpose and drive in the community by examining the current landscape for downtown revitalization.

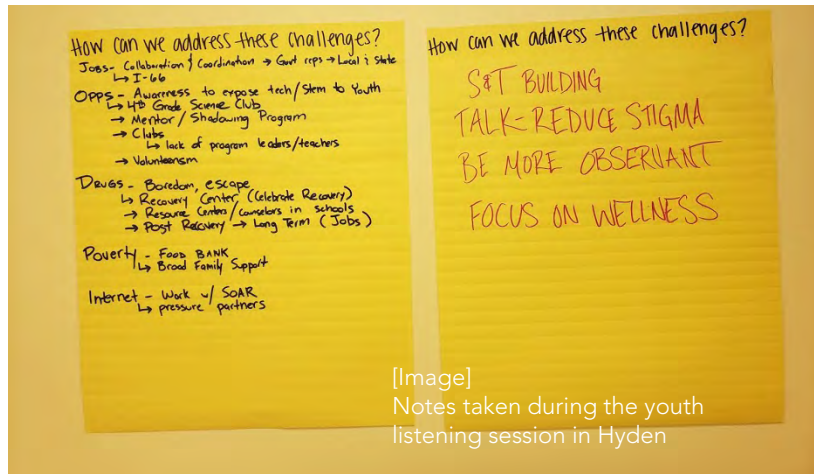
Downtown stakeholders planned, designed and hosted a weeklong event series call the Downtown Kickoff that featured:

- A walk and talk tour of downtown assets where community members and leaders actively looked at and discussed a number of existing assets. This discussion focused on the logistics and feasibility of ideas generated by attendees.
- An Explore Biggerstaff program invited attendees to explore the hiking trails adjacent to and overlooking downtown Hyden to collectively uncover new and innovative ways they can add value to the trail system and utilize their outdoor assets better.
- An Arts and Culture listening session featured local craftspeople and downtown stakeholders sharing ideas about how to better utilize the abundance of talent in the nearby area.
- A Youth Listening session was facilitated by CEDIK staff and provided a space for Hyden youth, and the adults that serve them, to discuss their visions for Hyden, as well as the impediments they perceive to getting involved.

- An open house facilitated by CEDIK staff introduced various technical assistance programs like First Impressions, Business Retention and Expansion and Creative Placemaking.
- The weeklong event culminated with a downtown concert at Riverside Park featuring students and staff of the Kentucky School of Bluegrass & Traditional Music.

Create a Community Council for future downtown revitalization project development.

- This event series was originally intended to help develop a new Community Council dedicated to downtown revitalization but it exceeded those expectations. As a result of the youth listening sessions Hyden leaders opened up space for youth board representatives, ensuring youth voices are considered in organizational decision making. In addition, and as a result of project development for the later implementation grant, new partners joined the Hyden downtown stakeholder team and have become substantial contributors of their skills, abilities and time.



IMPLEMENTATION GRANT - HYDEN

Culture House Programming. City of Hyden, Kiristen Webb (educator), Sisler Maggard Engineering, Ronnie Melton and LCHS Welding Class, Leslie County Chamber of Commerce, and Leslie County Community Foundation collaborated to make investments aimed at increasing foot traffic downtown. In addition to activating an underutilized building known as the Old Post Office into a space for cultural programming, this grant sought to develop additional sites downtown for families to enjoy. New pedestrian amenities, a community garden, playground equipment and two new sculptures were planned with the support of the local vocational program.

OUTCOMES

Improvements and programming activating the Old Post Office into a downtown Culture Hub.

- The Old Post Office building was recently purchased by the City of Hyden and downtown stakeholders began making improvements to the interior space. Improvements to develop a revolving museum site included new displays and collecting content. A new community recording studio has been developed on site to support the capture of community history through oral histories and serve as a space for content creators to hone their craft with community oriented projects technical assistance. An artist in residency program was established to foster the broad arts community programming at the Culture House and incubate young artists' skills in the region, however, this specific effort has been delayed by COVID-19 restrictions on in-person gatherings.

Beautify downtown and focus on enhancements aimed at supporting families.

- New features including planters, picnic tables, benches, and playground equipment have provided new spaces for families to enjoy in downtown Hyden. In addition to these family oriented features, and in partnership with local school teachers and staff, an outdoor classroom with a community garden was launched, providing a space for families to participate in and learn about gardening. Perhaps the most iconic feature of this beautification effort, two iconic eagle sculptures created in partnership with local welding vocational program, has been delayed by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic but is planned to resume once restrictions are lifted on in-person gatherings and the vocational program resumes.

Increase downtown foot traffic and visitor spending.

- Baseline measurements, tracked from 3pm-4pm, indicated on average, 18 pedestrians were present downtown before COVID-19. Utilizing an adapted intercept survey, Leslie County Community Foundation members found survey respondents rated their experience in Hyden as a 4.7 out of 5 and, on average spent roughly \$142 during their travels. Plans to consistently use the survey at festivals, special events and via volunteer encounters at the trailhead were interrupted when those opportunities were canceled as part of COVID-19 restrictions.



[Image]
Participants at the kick off event for the downtown revitalization week event



[Image]
Participants touring downtown Hyden

PROJECT RECOMMENDATIONS

ABOUT

Over the course of the project (2017-20) local stakeholders, partners, technical assistance providers and communities at large have engaged in and with their downtowns in new ways. We have learned from each other, built collaborative partnerships, explored other downtowns, successfully developed and implemented projects, ignited new ideas, developed new skills, built the skills of others and endured a global pandemic together. However, these accomplishments only represent a launch point for more sustained downtown revitalization efforts in the future. The collective lessons learned, established practices and challenges illuminated can provide the foundation for future downtown revitalization efforts.



Classic
mountain scene
in south eastern
Kentucky

LOCAL LEADERSHIP AND CAPACITY

Downtown revitalization takes more than a single person's best intentions and requires a collective effort working towards mutual goals. The Promise Zone Downtown Revitalization Project has shown that local leadership, shared ownership, and broad capacity create positive results but requires a deep commitment and understanding between downtown stakeholders, and about community assets, challenges, and visions for the future.

Understandably, every community is different in regards to skills, abilities, interests, assets and existing investments in downtown revitalization. With so much occupying the development landscape it is understandable why this may be the case. As such, the timeline and delivery of technical assistance programs was not linear or prescriptive but rather delivered as requested, allowing community stakeholders to commit to only what they felt was feasible and impactful. For example, not every community committed to the Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) Program because it required a substantial time commitment. As a result, communities may have missed out on the relationship building with local business owners noted as an unexpected outcome by communities that participated in the BRE program. Local capacity is foundational to future efforts.

Communities with dedicated, paid staff, responsible for downtown revitalization efforts (however narrow or broadly defined) often demonstrated greater overall capacity. A critical piece for many downtown teams in the Promise Zone was a paid staff member to drive, coordinate and provide leadership for the community's downtown revitalization process. Practices often associated with paid downtown coordinators that provide capacity to development efforts were observed:

- Project coordination and acting as liaison between multiple parties.
- Data collection to measure and document project impacts.
- Promotion of downtown activities, opportunities, programs and events.
- Often tasked with grant writing and administration.
- If affiliated with the Kentucky Main Street, the main street manager has programmatic commitment to support enhanced urban design & placemaking efforts.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Work to create or develop a dedicated funding source for a paid staff member devoted to supporting coordination and providing local leadership and continuity to downtown revitalization efforts.
2. Continue to seek out opportunities to build the skills, abilities and leadership capacity of elected officials, community volunteers, business owners and downtown stakeholders to address current and future challenges.



LOCAL FOUNDATIONS AND PHILANTHROPIC CAPACITY

At the onset of the pandemic, some of the first organizational responses emerged from local nonprofits and philanthropic organizations. In the Kentucky Promise Zone, the Foundation for Appalachian Kentucky took a leadership role, in partnership with the Appalachian Impact Fund, CEDIK and Invest 606 to create the Eastern Kentucky Downtown Business Stimulus Fund. This fund leveraged existing assets, relationships and donations to respond directly to local businesses. Communities with existing foundations also created their own hyper-local responses to support businesses, often taking the shape of a stimulus fund or mini grant program.

The Eastern Kentucky Downtown Business Stimulus Fund provided 153 grants, ranging from \$600 to \$3000. In total, \$385,400 went to business owners (60% female) in 23 counties representing a mix of restaurants, unique retail, attractions, personal services and other businesses active in the broader downtown and tourism ecosystem. The fund received over 550 applications requesting more than \$1.5 million dollars.

Communities with existing local philanthropic leadership, capacity and available assets accessed financial support more quickly than communities without existing relationships with philanthropic organizations. Communities without this specialized capacity were relegated to navigate the often confusing assortment of federal assistance programs and loan products available for COVID-19 relief.

RECOMMENDATION

1. Continue developing local (or regional) philanthropic programs or organizations to build local knowledge, leadership, capacity and interests to serve needs with local giving and investment.

RELATIONSHIPS MATTER

The arc of this project has shown that our ability to come together and work towards revitalizing our downtowns is often built upon relationships – both existing and those we build. The Promise Zone Downtown Revitalization Project has helped build and establish new relationships within downtowns, counties and among the region. At the heart of the project was an intentional effort to create a regional network of stakeholders using a series of facilitated convenings to learn together, collaborate on efforts, share ideas and support each other's efforts. Even public policies were shared among the network inspiring their implementation in other communities. For example, communities have learned about and later adopted downtown business development incentive programs and nuisance code enforcement updates to address underutilized, vacant, abandoned or dangerous properties as well as litter. The relationships and information shared has inspired and supported a number of innovative regional downtown revitalization strategies.

At quarterly convenings, attendees cultivated space for skills building (team and personal). Stakeholders shared, more often than not, that the networking opportunities and relationship building components that took place during the convenings were most impactful. In focus group conversations with downtown stakeholders, many noted the convenings as among the most impactful elements outside of the First Impressions Program and community design projects.

These networking opportunities facilitated pollination of ideas and in many cases led communities to adapting similar programs or policies they heard shared by others. Stakeholders shared they now feel more comfortable speaking in public as a result of presenting to the regional network and providing updates and that they felt

valued being asked to share insights with other communities. Some shared they were empowered to learn there were mutual challenges faced in other communities ultimately helping them solve issues together, while others shared a new commitment to regionalism and collaboration within their own counties and in the region at large.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Continue to embrace regional efforts, collaborations and shared ownership (within counties and the region) focusing on mutual interests, assets and capacity to address shared challenges.
2. Seek out opportunities to join regional networks, collaborations or initiatives that provide relationship building opportunities with other stakeholders seeking solutions to shared challenges.

COVID-19

The most dramatic and impactful issue encountered during this project revolves around the unprecedented COVID-19 global health pandemic. The challenges have been substantial, however what we have learned about ourselves and our communities has also been substantial. We have been forced to confront our values and reevaluate priorities. As we consider what is next after the pandemic it is important to reflect on the impacts and observations from this time. For some these impacts may have been mere inconveniences and for others life altering. It has meant working virtually from home, not working at all, travel and crowd restrictions, canceled events and community engagement opportunities, supply chain disruptions, economic uncertainty, job insecurity, increased commitments at home with youth or elders, virtual learning, shifting shopping patterns and dealing with the reality of death and losses in our families and communities. The last year has been incredibly taxing on individuals, families, communities and society.

BROADBAND

While physical distancing and other public health practices have been encouraged we have not lost the need to stay connected. This has largely meant outreach, engagement, organizing and simply maintaining interpersonal relationships has shifted to virtual platforms. Not only have we seen the ways we connect change in real time but we are collectively shaping how we use technology moving forward. While virtual spaces are limited by internet connectivity it is important to note that virtual spaces have been more accessible to some. For example, individuals who traditionally work during meetings have been able to join remotely, and for others it has meant not choosing between childcare and attending a meeting. However challenges still persist in terms of access to broadband internet. It is important to note that mobile phone ownership has increased connectivity options. In May of 2019, the Pew Research Center reported that 44 percent of adults in households with incomes below \$30,000 do not have broadband but 71% own smart phones.

Addressing broadband access, while important to the work of this project, was not a central focus. The COVID-19 pandemic pushed the issue to the forefront, and this section would be incomplete without providing recommendations focusing on broadband access.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Continue to close the digital divide by prioritizing the reduction of barriers to broadband access and costs associated with realizing the 'last mile.'
2. Continue to develop mobile friendly alternatives to desktop web interfaces and the infrastructure supporting its networks.
3. Continue to hold internet service providers accountable for

services (including upload and download speeds) they have committed to when contracted to provide broadband products.

OUTDOOR SPACES AND THE PUBLIC REALM

COVID-19 has left no place unaffected. Its impacts have reached every rural, urban and suburban community whether they have the infrastructure or capacity to deal with these new challenges or not. The connectivity between people and places has perhaps never mattered more or at least been more obvious. The connections between the physical, social, civic and financial capacity of yesterday is the foundation for our resilience and recovery today.

During lockdown phases and subsequent periods of increased public restrictions and precautions, including social distancing, or limited indoor capacity, the ability to go outside and get some fresh air never felt so important. Parks and outdoor spaces have always been known to offer benefits related to physical and mental health, community relationship building and habitat protection. In seeking refuge from the pandemic, outdoor spaces have been elevated from mere amenities to critical infrastructure needed for escape and recharging.

It has been well documented throughout the pandemic that more people sought out outdoor spaces. Many parks, green spaces, and trail systems have experienced increases in local use. At times, high visitation strained the capacity of local parks and resulted in modified restrictions on the numbers of users at a time, the activities available and in some cases temporary closures. These moments of access inspired many people to explore their neighborhood for outdoor recreation. Many communities throughout the region noted that as car traffic decreased, pedestrian traffic increased. This was most

notable in downtowns and adjacent neighborhoods.

When given the opportunity to invest philanthropic funds targeted at supporting COVID related economic recovery as part of the Healthy Downtowns Initiative, two thirds of the participating Promise Zone communities prioritized investments in the public realm and public spaces. The stakeholders responsible for a community garden and outdoor classroom (planned pre-pandemic) noted that it had a larger impact now than they originally anticipated. They attributed their observation to more residents simply needing a place to go because they have been in their homes more than ever. Each example highlights a real investment in increasing access to outdoor spaces by promoting both public health and economic development.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Prioritize investments in pedestrian infrastructure that promote increasing accessibility, connectivity and improved access to sidewalks, walking, hiking and biking trails and nearby water resources.
2. Determine the impact of decreased car traffic on downtown streets and businesses and consider the conversion and redesign of currently underutilized parking, alleys or even roads as outdoor seating and dining to support local businesses.
3. Consider prioritizing future investments in accessible pedestrian infrastructure, maintaining aging infrastructure and designing new public spaces that serve the needs of people above cars.
4. Prioritize flexible or multi-use outdoor learning environments and experiences that provide access to COVID safe, family-friendly extracurricular activities, bridging the need for respite from virtual learning and opportunities to enjoy and receive the benefits of being outdoors.

LOCAL MATTERS

It has never been so evident that communities are passionate about their local businesses. As economic uncertainty loomed over every community, one of the most resounding responses were collective actions/programs to support local business enterprises. Never before has the idea of supporting local, generating local tax dollars and keeping businesses open been so prioritized and championed. We have seen the creation of take-out bingo cards, gift card incentive programs, initiatives to feed front line health workers by local businesses, transitioning outdoor spaces to serve the needs of local restaurants with no longer accessible indoor spaces.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Continue to develop programs that promote, bring attention to, and ultimately contribute to the success of local businesses and enterprises.
2. Consider developing a local first campaign, building off of the collective support shown during the pandemic and the collective sacrifices made by many front line retail workers.

WHAT'S NEXT?

DOWNTOWN ECOSYSTEM APPROACH

The Promise Zone Downtown Revitalization Project has documented that revitalization efforts are multifaceted and complicated at times because of all the moving parts. It makes sense, given the development histories and existing infrastructure in the region's downtowns, that reimagining their uses can come with challenges. Sustained revitalization will require moving beyond the successes of this project (visioning, planning, skill relationship building, assessments, design solutions, prioritization and implementing

projects) to thinking about how our collective efforts will contribute to a broader investment landscape and entrepreneurial ecosystem.

A September 2020 study by the National Main Street organization, in partnership with the Bass Center for Transformative Placemaking, investigated the impacts that being located in a downtown core had on an establishment's ability to mitigate negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic in both urban and rural downtowns. In nearly every example, small businesses in older, established commercial corridors, downtowns and Main Streets proved more likely to leverage their physical location (in proximity to other businesses, resources and amenities that) in ways that mitigated COVID-19 impacts more than businesses in other locations. The affirmation that businesses located in downtowns have generally been more resilient during the pandemic speaks directly to the built environment underpinning a community's resilience more broadly.

Perhaps the most significant and insurmountable challenge faced in the built environment during the Promise Zone Downtown Revitalization Project were the physical constraints and limitations presented by the realities of downtown buildings. Nearly every community has at least one building, however large or small, that presents a real challenge with tangible and varying obstacles. While downtown buildings are iconic they are also difficult to restore and maintain once they have fallen into disrepair. The reality is many Kentucky Promise Zone downtowns are burdened with underutilized or abandoned structures, and transitioning these spaces will require outside private capital investments beyond what is traditionally available in grant supported efforts. The next iteration of CEDIK's downtown revitalization to address just this question is the recently funded ARC POWER grant to launch The ReVitalize, ReInvest, ReDevelop Appalachia (R3) Initiative.

THE REVITALIZE, REINVEST, REDEVELOP APPALACHIA (R3) INITIATIVE

R3 is a strategic partnership between the Appalachian Impact Fund at the Foundation for Appalachian Kentucky and the Community and Economic Development Initiative of Kentucky (CEDIK) at the University of Kentucky to revitalize southeastern Kentucky's downtowns, support entrepreneurial ecosystems and promising sectors and begin readying our communities for new investment. By creating comprehensive downtown revitalization plans oriented towards supporting entrepreneurs in the downtown ecosystem, building the capacity of local leaders and attracting new private investments, the R3 initiative will help infuse much needed outside capital into our downtowns.

The R3 Initiative takes a four-step approach to readying communities for investment and building markets for multiple forms of capital absorption. These steps include: city-wide planning that engages a diverse set of stakeholders, identification of tangible catalytic projects, deployment of early-stage impact investment capital to amplify the competitiveness for outside capital investment, followed by deployment of later-stage traditional capital to complete projects. In order to concentrate investments into the hardest-to-serve communities there is an underlying need to supplement the existing investment ecosystem that R3 aims to address.

CEDIK is fulfilling a vital need at the front-end of this progression to build local capacity that enables inclusive and comprehensive planning, helping communities determine the necessary and impactful revitalization projects in their own downtowns. The R3 Initiative will help build the Appalachian Impact Fund's existing social impact investment fund with investment capital targeted for

the implementation of catalytic downtown revitalization projects. These investments will be used for downtown revitalization projects that present entrepreneurial opportunities that can: improve infrastructure and the built environment, start and grow small businesses, retain and attract families, draw in visitors for extended stays across the region and attract additional private investment.

[Image Top]
View at Pine Mountain
Settlement School

[Image Bottom]
Kentucky historic
marker



INDICATORS OF DOWNTOWN SUCCESS

A number of broad indicators were introduced using the 2014 University of Illinois Extension 'Downtown Success Indicators' publication to provide insights on how to begin measuring revitalization progress. CEDIK references these indicators in its own work to gain perspective and evaluate the relative successes of investments to downtowns. While broad, all the following indicators focus on a need to get people downtown for unique experiences not easily replicated in suburban development. The following represents a summary of indicators to consider in tracking downtown revitalization investments and metrics.

North Central Regional Center for Rural Development, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and University of Illinois Extension. "Downtown Success Indicators: A Review of Literature." August 2014. <https://fyi.extension.wisc.edu/resilientdowntowns/files/2016/06/59491.pdf>



Students utilizing playground equipment in Hyden City Park

DOWNTOWN RETAIL

Downtown Retail has long been understood as an indicator of downtown health and vibrancy. Retail activity attracts a daytime population, contributes to the local tax base and increases to sidewalk activity.

Suggested Measures:

- Proportion of all retail businesses located downtown
- Increase in retail businesses downtown over a time period
- Occupancy rate and longevity of businesses
- Daytime population
- Business mix

DOWNTOWN HOUSING

Downtown Housing and residents provide a 24 hour customer base for downtown businesses and associated amenities. Downtowns provide unique housing opportunities for a number of target populations.

Suggested Measures:

- Proportion of city's population residing downtown
- Increase in downtown housing units over a time period
- Surrounding market rate of residential neighborhoods
- Regulatory framework supporting downtown housing

ORGANIZATIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS

Organizations and Partnerships are critical to the implementation of downtown revitalization efforts. They play active leadership roles while bringing a variety of stakeholders together to develop the community's long term vision.

Suggested Measures:

- Active partnerships and coalitions
- Downtown development authority (or organizational support)
- Downtown centric plan
- Community involvement/engagement (affection from citizenry)

DOWNTOWN TRAFFIC GENERATORS

Downtown Traffic Generators come in a variety of forms but ultimately aim to attract people downtown. These assets, when leveraged, provide a competitive advantage. Traffic generators can be both man-made, like a university, or natural, like a waterfront.

Suggested Measures:

- Proportion of the city's civic and cultural uses located downtown
- Access to natural amenities (or waterfront development or parks)
- Arts and entertainment amenities
- Educational establishments
- Civic or judicial buildings

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Preservation and Rehabilitation of structures neglected by the retail exodus to the periphery protect the identity of unique places not replicable in the suburbs. Historic preservation helps define the character of place and encourages investment in neglected and underutilized buildings.

Suggested Measures:

- Proportion of city's registered historic structures located downtown
- Number of hotel/motel rooms per 1,000 central city residents
- Rehabilitation and Historic preservation initiatives
- Heritage tourism programs and sites

IMMIGRATION AND DIVERSITY

Immigration and Diversity are relatively new indicators of downtown success. Looking at diversity provides insights into a community's openness to a diverse population that includes non-traditional families, LGBTQIA+ and immigrants of varying faiths and ethnicities.

Suggested Measures:

- Percentage of foreign born population in the city
- Percentage of non-white population in the city
- Civic leaders' attitude toward diverse populations

MIXED USES

Multi-functionality refers to the historic roles downtown have played over time as destinations for shopping, services, employment, housing and culture. Successful downtowns offer a variety of interwoven opportunities that serve to attract people at various times of the day.

Suggested Measures:

- Variety of land uses downtown
- Mixed use development featuring housing, office use or conference/meeting space

DESIGN AND PLANNING

Downtown Design can improve the quality of life of residents and functionality of the built environment. Successful downtowns have clear boundaries and entrances - you should know when you have arrived. The sense of place is a cumulative expression of a multitude of downtown design elements.

Suggested Measures:

- Clear boundary and entrances
- Design guidelines
- Bike/pedestrian friendliness
- Public spaces
- Streetscape and facade improvement programs
- Accessibility and connectivity

BRANDING AND MARKETING

Branding and Promotion are marketing strategies deployed to reach larger audiences and disseminate information about downtown programs, opportunities and vision. Successful downtowns use marketing strategies to let residents and tourists know about the unique experiences their downtowns offer.

Suggested Measures:

- Special events
- Marketing initiatives

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Downtown Finance, employment and demographic data provide insights on long term changes.

Suggested Measures:

- Change in assessed value of property
- Change in real property investment
- Change in downtown employment by sector
- Percentage increase in rental value
- Income of downtown residents
- Crime known to police per 1000 residents
- Downtown labor force

COUNTY DATA PROFILES

CEDIK's research team has created and maintains updated data profiles for stakeholders to use, relevant to the community. These data profiles provide insights on a number of valuable metrics and can support various decision making processes. To access the most recent data profiles for your community please visit <https://cedik.ca.uky.edu/CountyDataProfiles>

After selecting the appropriate profile type simply click on your county name using the dropdown menu. These data profiles are compiled from data gathered from federal, state and local databases and are updated as new information becomes available.

County Budget Profile

- Population Estimates
- Total Tax Revenues
- Change in Population
- Change in Revenues
- Change in Spending
- County Revenue Sources
- Weather Related Disaster Indicators

Economic Profile

- Employment (top industries and location quotient)
- Labor Force
- Commute Times
- Median Household Income
- Poverty %
- Unemployment Rate
- Personal Income

Housing Profile

- Total Housing Units
- Owner Occupied Units
- Renter Occupied Units
- Homeowner Vacancy
- Renter Vacancy
- Housing Stock Age
- Housing Characteristics (mortgage rent, taxes, cost burden, etc.)
- Commuting Patterns

Retail Profile

- Retail Employment and Pull Factors
- Percent Change in Retail Employment and Sales
- Retail Earnings and Employee Age

Small Business Profile

- Total Jobs (Gains and Losses)
- Sales per Business & Employee
- Top Employment Industries
- Small Business Types
- Self-Employment

Workforce Profile

- Workforce by Education and Gender
- Commuting Patterns
- Employment by Occupation
- Earnings

