



# Leading into 2050

*Building Resilience for  
Health, Climate &  
Biodiversity*

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Office of Community Revitalization  
April 27, 2021

## Today I'd Like To:

- Give an overview of EPA's Office of Community Revitalization and our **planning assistance** programs
- Discuss how EPA is helping communities build **healthy, economically vibrant, environmentally sustainable, and equitable** neighborhoods and downtowns
- Share some examples of how communities are boosting their resilience at the local level by shaping their **built environment**
- Make the case that **investing in community capacity** is key to building healthy, resilient communities



## What is EPA?

**The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is a federal agency that:**

- Implements environmental laws/statutes that have been passed by Congress (Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, etc.).
- Conducts research on the best environmental protection approaches.
- Educates the public about environmental issues and ways to protect the environment and human health.
- Partners with states and local governments and other organizations as they seek to protect the environment and improve human health, through grants and technical assistance.

# Why EPA?

EPA's mission:  
Protect human health and the environment.

Where and how we build our communities  
impacts human health and our land, air, and water.



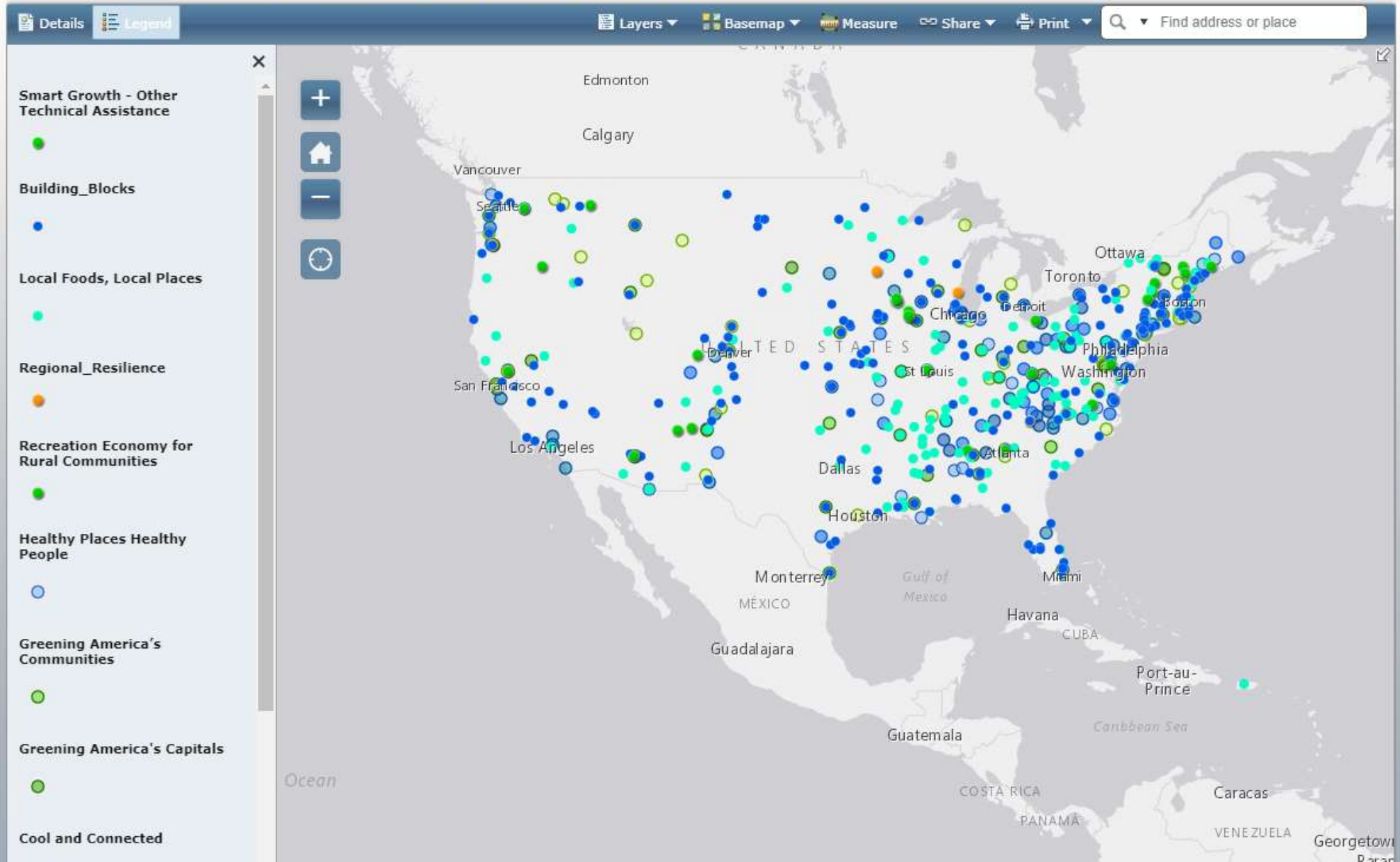
# EPA Office of Community Revitalization

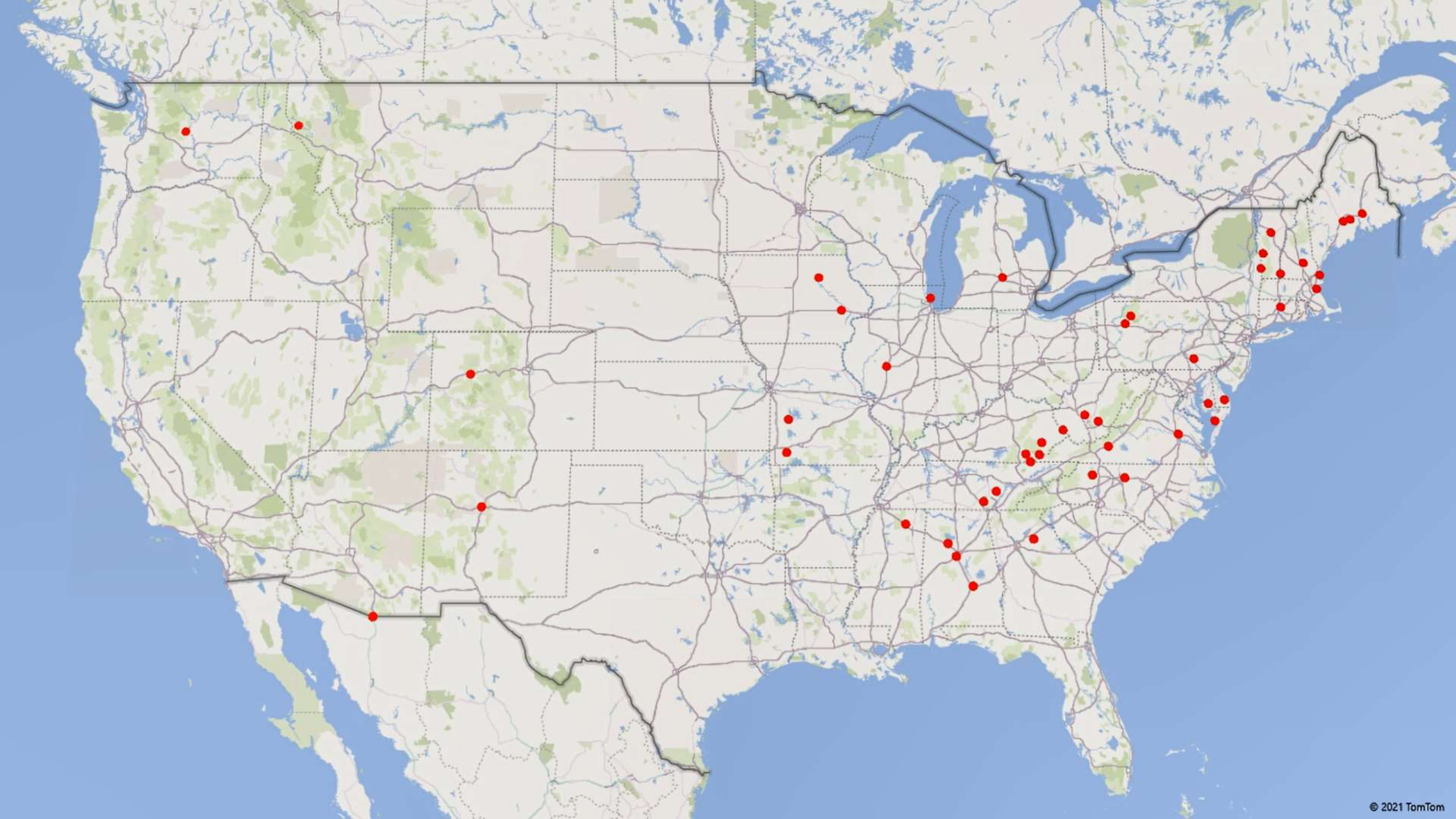
- In EPA's Office of Policy (reaches across all programs)
- Work on cross cutting environmental issues, helping communities grow in ways that protect the environment and human health (land use decisions are made at the local level)
- Communities ask for our help creating a vision for what they want their communities to look like in the future
  - ✓ We provide planning assistance
  - ✓ We convene stakeholders together to have these conversations
  - ✓ We bring federal agencies to communities so they can learn how their programs can help



# Smart Growth in Your Community

## EPA Community Revitalization TA Projects





## PLANNING ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

- **Local Foods, Local Places:** role of local food systems in revitalizing neighborhoods and downtowns
- **Cool & Connected:** broadband as a catalyst to leverage investment on rural main streets
- **Healthy Places for Healthy People:** health care facilities as economic anchors and catalysts of a holistic approach to health
- **Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities:** a suite of tools to help build on place-based community assets
- **Recreation Economy for Rural Communities:** boosting the potential of outdoor recreation to revitalize main streets and diversify the economy



# PLANNING ASSISTANCE PROCESS

- Understand context, self assessment
- Refine the problem statement, goals
- Customize agenda and materials
- Coach community on stakeholder participation
- Engage federal stakeholder partners

## Assess



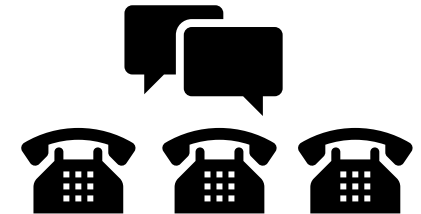
## Convene

- Conduct community tour
- Affirm collective vision
- Assess assets, challenges relative to advancing the community's goals
- Discuss relevant case studies and generate ideas and locally relevant strategies
- Refine goals and identify specific actions and next steps to move forward



- Document Action Plan
- Conduct follow up discussions to review and refine action steps
- Engage project steering committee and stakeholders to identify additional resources/funding
- Finalize the blueprint for implementation

## Implement

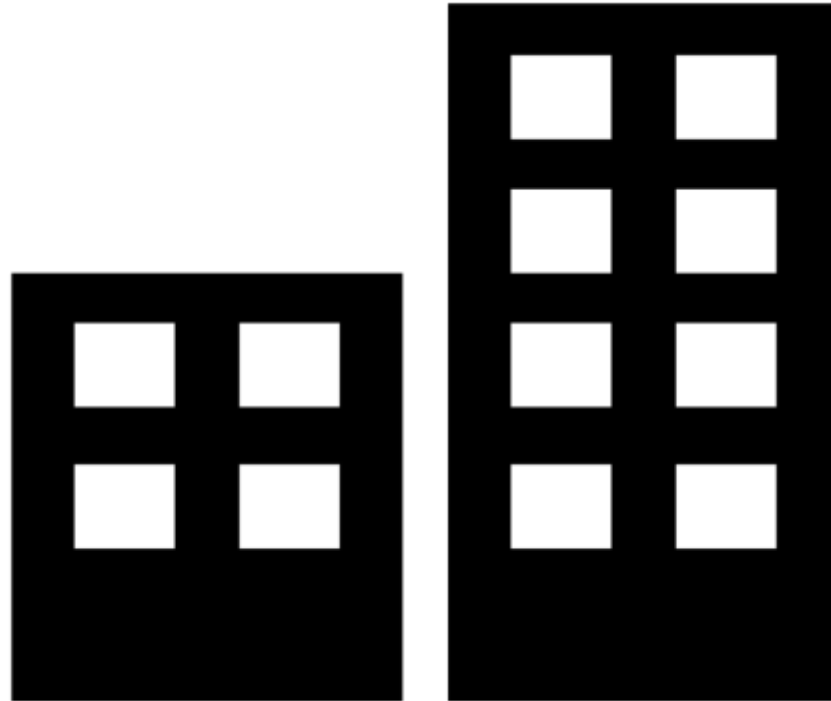


# BUILDING HEALTHY, RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

HEALTHY  
PEOPLE



HEALTHY PLACE &  
OPPORTUNITY



HEALTHY  
COMMUNITY

*People AND place must  
BOTH be healthy for the  
community to be healthy!*

# PLACES AFFECT PEOPLE'S HEALTH

Economic Stability	Neighborhood and Physical Environment	Education	Food	Community and Social Context	Health Care System
Employment	Housing	Literacy	Hunger	Social integration	Health coverage
Income	Transportation	Language	Access to healthy options	Support systems	Provider availability
Expenses	Safety	Early childhood education		Community engagement	Provider linguistic and cultural competency
Debt	Parks	Vocational training		Discrimination	Quality of care
Medical bills	Playgrounds	Higher education			
Support	Walkability				

## Health Outcomes

Mortality, Morbidity, Life Expectancy, Health Care Expenditures, Health Status, Functional Limitations

Source: Kaiser Permanente

A person's **zip code** is as much a predictor of their health as their genetic code

# Elements of a Healthy, Equitable Community



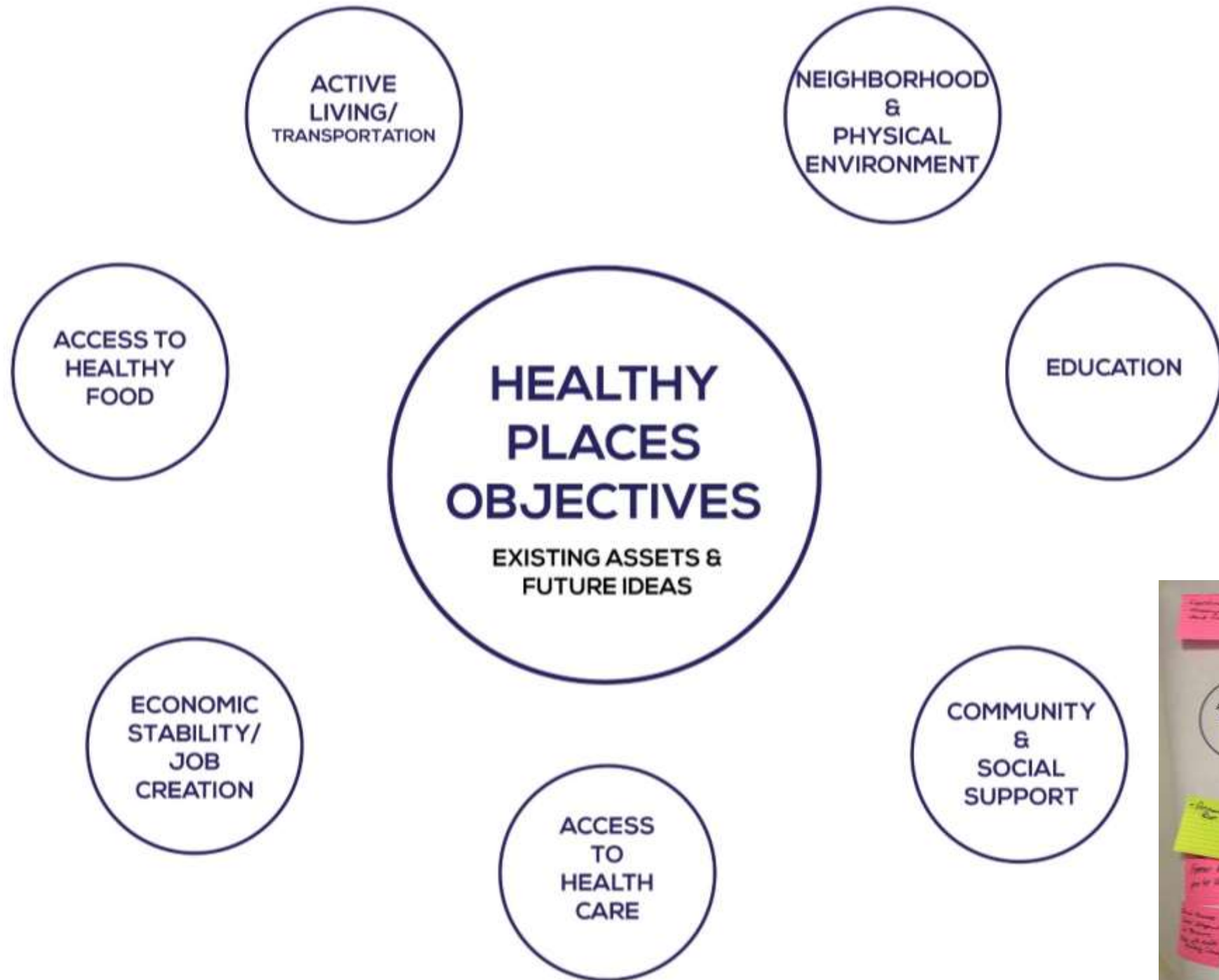
Together, these elements provide cumulative health and equity benefits:

- Physical health
- Mental health
- Economic security
- Safety
- Community cohesion
- Civic engagement

# What Makes a Healthy, Resilient Community?

*A healthy attitude IS CONTAGIOUS.*  
-TOM STOPPARD





ACCESS TO  
HEALTHY  
FOOD



WE  
WATER-  
VINE  
Schools





ACTIVE  
LIVING/  
TRANSPORTATION



ACCESS  
TO  
HEALTH  
CARE



EDUCATION

I LOVE THE Y BECAUSE...  
Of all the new **Specialty Fitness Classes** like Express Workouts, Boot Camp, Women on Weights, TRX, Kettlebell, and more. No matter what your fitness level might be, each is specially designed for you.

NO  
TRESPASSING

NO  
SMOKING  
ON THE  
Banger  
YMCA  
Properties



ECONOMIC  
STABILITY/  
JOB  
CREATION



NEIGHBORHOOD  
&  
PHYSICAL  
ENVIRONMENT



COMMUNITY  
&  
SOCIAL  
SUPPORT



A group of people, mostly women, are walking outdoors on a paved path. They are dressed in professional or business-casual attire. In the foreground, a woman in a purple top and red pants is walking towards the camera, gesturing with her hands. To her right, another woman in a light blue top and dark pants is walking. In the background, several other people are visible, some wearing name tags. A large green circle with a white border is overlaid on the center of the image, containing the text "STORIES FROM THE ROAD" in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters.

STORIES  
FROM THE  
ROAD

- ◎ Population ~1,400 in southern West Virginia
- ◎ Devastated by severe flooding summer 2016
- ◎ Local Foods, Local Places community in 2017
- ◎ How can Rainelle come back stronger from the flood? And how can local food reinvigorate the local economy and heal people who are suffering?



**RAINELLE, WEST VIRGINIA**





- Assets: people; commitment to revitalizing their downtown and creating opportunity for their residents; strong local food entrepreneurs; natural resources & tourism potential
- Challenges: Decades of economic decline (coal and timber); devastated building stock (residential and commercial); high poverty and unemployment; food insecurity; high incidence of opioid use disorder



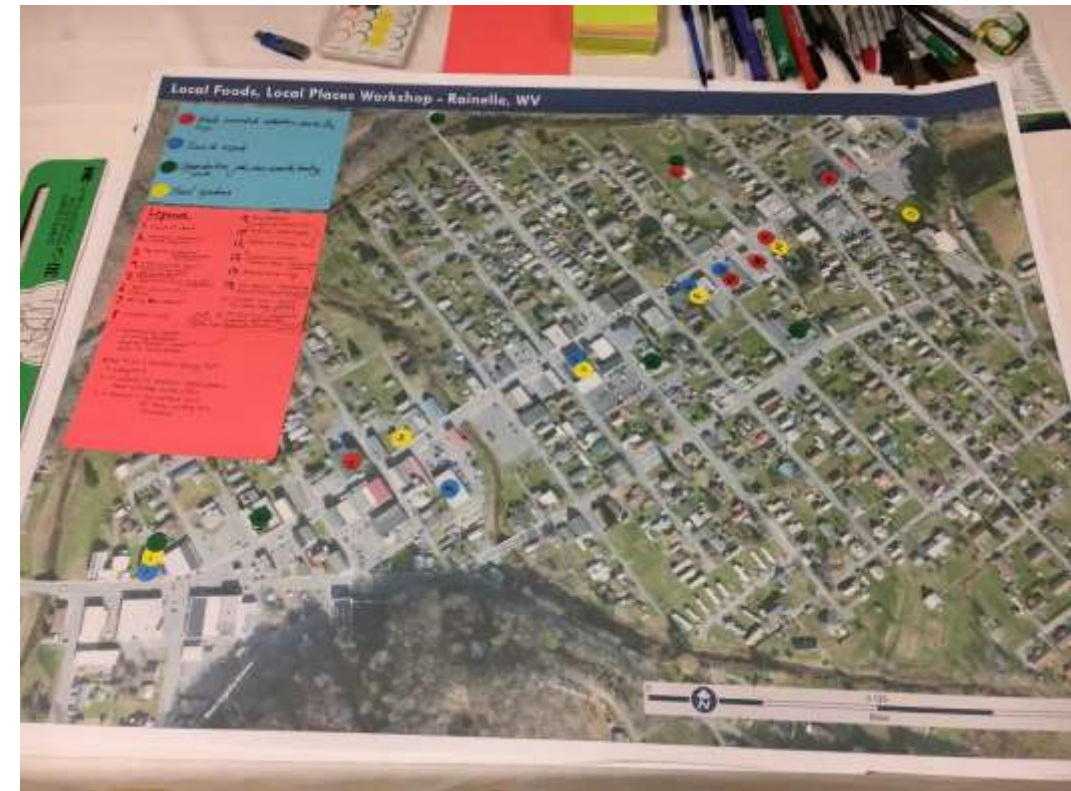
# Fruits of Labor Café: Food as Recovery and Resilience



# The Workshop

## Workshop Goals:

1. *Make Rainelle a community of health and healing*
2. *Activate and transform downtown Rainelle*
3. *Grow the local food economy and market*
4. *Create economic and recreation drivers to diversify the regional economy*



Video from Rainelle's Local Foods, Local Places workshop:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GdXZRTcXNIk>



Rainelle 2018 community workshop. Image: EPA/OCR

- EPA and FEMA partnered together to lead a follow-up workshop focused on one specific aspect of the LFLP action plan – helping the community finalize a 24-mile recreational trail to bring people to Main Street Rainelle and connect to regional parks and trails
- Appalachian Regional Commission is funding trails investments, recognizing the natural assets in the region



Future Meadow River Trailhead. Image: EPA/OCR

- ◎ Population ~3,000 in northwestern Pennsylvania
- ◎ Local Foods, Local Places Community in 2015 (Forest County, PA)
- ◎ At the gateway to the Allegheny National Forest
- ◎ How to:
  - ◎ Make Marienville a recreation trail hub for the region
  - ◎ Brand Forest County as a place for local food, arts and culture, and recreation opportunities
  - ◎ Build on the natural assets of the region



MARIENVILLE, PENNSYLVANIA

# Marienville, Pennsylvania: *Leveraging the Outdoor Recreation Economy*



## 4 Seasons Trail & Recreation Hub

- EPA technical assistance support (Local Foods, Local Places) in 2015
- Appalachian Regional Commission implementation support (for the town's acquisition of the train station)
- Town purchased station + 5 acres
- Rail ROW will connect to North Country Trail
- Snowmobile and ATV trail connection into the National Forest under development
- "Recreation has always been a large part of the local economy and with the addition of this trail hub the Supervisors hope to give entrepreneurs opportunities to develop new businesses or expand businesses already here."



- Jenks Township received a **\$1.2 million DOT grant** (Transportation Alternatives Program) to construct a six-mile segment of trail, ADA parking lots, and a pavilion.
- An **Appalachian Regional Commission grant for \$67,000** will be used to update the recreational hub that will provide ADA restrooms and information for recreational activities to include hiking, cycling, ATV, snowmobile, cross country skiing and equestrian use.



**Kevin Carter and Rob Fallon**



- 26 miles of paved trail now completed – allowing pedestrians and bicyclists to travel from Clarion to Marienville
- Community gardens built – raised beds tilled and planted by town residents







- Train depot renovations in progress – new benches, stamped concrete, and parking
- Old library building demolished and replaced with a new one in the heart of town
- Generating buzz with Facebook posts and keychain giveaways – building community enthusiasm for and enjoyment of the project



# Takeaways

- Resilience is about as much about **people** as it is about the environment
- **Community sparkplugs** make things happen, so building **community capacity** to make change is key
- Starting with the **issues that resonate**, and meeting communities where they are, can help create the motivation to tackle these bigger issues
- Don't forget the long-term climate, health, and biodiversity impacts of **land use decisions** – where and how we build matters!!





THANK YOU!

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Learn more about EPA's Office of  
Community Revitalization at:  
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