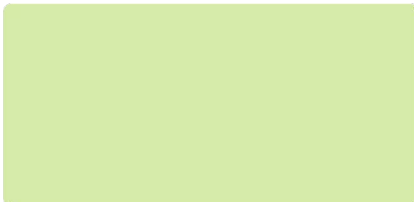
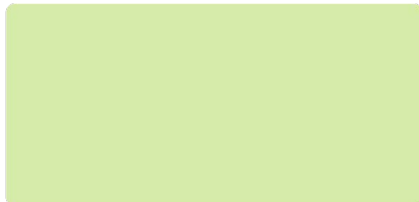
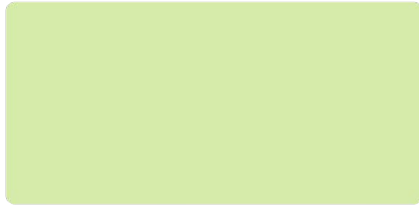
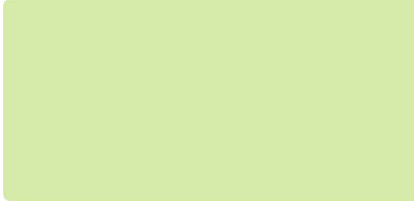




LOCAL FOODS, LOCAL PLACES

Technical Assistance Program



Local Foods, Local Places
Community Action Plan
for Graham, North
Carolina

July 2017



For more information about Local Foods, Local Places visit:

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

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Community Story

Located between North Carolina’s Triangle and Triad regions, Graham is the county seat and the second largest city in Alamance County, behind Burlington. Graham’s downtown core, highway transportation access, and proximity to major population centers in central North Carolina provide unique economic and community development opportunities for the city. However, the city faces challenges as well, including high downtown vacancy rates, elevated poverty, and low food access.

Originally settled around 1850 as the planned county seat for the newly created Alamance County, Graham’s city plan included 68 lots oriented around the central Court Square and County Courthouse.¹ This legacy plan still shapes downtown, where a strong building fabric and gridded street pattern center on the shops of Court Square and the courthouse. Wide sidewalks, retail shopfronts, and historic architecture characterize downtown Graham’s charming small-town character, even in the face of economic challenges.

In its early years, Graham emerged as a center of trade for the county, but the city’s local dominance diminished following a municipal decision to prohibit railroad tracks within a mile of downtown. As railroad activity expanded, Burlington—just a few miles to the west—began to grow as it met the demand for the rail lines prohibited by Graham. Burlington eventually became Alamance County’s most populous city. Currently, Burlington has nearly four times the population of Graham with over 50,000 residents.²

Today, many of Graham’s downtown residents face high poverty, and the city has over a 25 percent poverty rate.³ Much of the city is classified by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) as a “food desert,”⁴ a place where low food access combines with high poverty. Obesity and diabetes rates are both higher than the state average.⁵ These combined statistics signal significant challenges in healthy food access and consumption.



Figure 1 –Alamance County Courthouse dominates Graham’s central court square. Image Credit: Community Food Lab



Figure 2 – Graham sits at an important highway crossroads. Image Credit: Community Food Lab

¹ City of Graham. “History.” <http://www.cityofgraham.com/about-graham/history/> Accessed June 14, 2017.

² U.S. Census Bureau. “American FactFinder.” https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/community_facts.xhtml# Accessed June 15, 2017.

³ Healthy Food Access Portal Mapping Tool, <http://www.healthyfoodaccess.org/get-started/research-your-community>

⁴ USDA Economic Research Service. “Food Access Research Atlas.” <https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-access-research-atlas/go-to-the-atlas/> Accessed June 14, 2017.

⁵ Healthy Food Access Portal Mapping Tool, <http://www.healthyfoodaccess.org/get-started/research-your-community>

At the intersection of major highways and close to larger neighboring cities, Graham is the rare small southern town that has not been bypassed by a major highway, resulting in a downtown that combines elements of nostalgia, a busy level of traffic, and a well-defined urban grid. With 14,468 residents, a walkable downtown, and city leaders on a first-name basis with many citizens, Graham maintains a traditional small-town character. (For the full Community Data profile, see **Appendix A**). Several major employers are in or near Graham including the offices of Alamance County government and Alamance Community College. Other area employers include the local school system, LabCorp, the Alamance Regional Medical Center, and Elon University.

In 2016, the city of Graham requested assistance through the Local Foods, Local Places program to develop an action plan for promoting local food systems and a healthy, walkable, economically vibrant community. 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 (EPA), USDA, the U.S. Department of Transportation, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Appalachian Regional Commission, and the Delta Regional Authority. Graham was one of 24 communities across the United States selected to participate in the program in 2017.

A variety of community partners came together in Graham to form a Local Foods, Local Places Steering Committee in preparation for this technical assistance award (see Figure 3). The Committee hopes to formalize their group through regular meetings, community events, and partnership on projects to implement the goals and actions outlined in this report.

Many organizations and agencies in Graham are currently responding to health and economic challenges by working to increase access to fresh, healthy food and by making local food a part of the community's economic and community development strategies. City leaders report positive momentum towards change as seen in the emergence of the Healthy Alamance organization, their Food and Wellness Collaboratives, three new nearby farmers markets, a Children's Museum, and an Arts Council. In recent years, downtown Graham has seen new businesses emerge, new housing developments get started, and new renovations bringing historic buildings back to life.

In their request for Local Foods, Local Places technical assistance, the city of Graham and the Steering Committee named walkability and improving access to healthy food as primary goals

The remainder of this report and appendices document the engagement process, the workshop activities, and most importantly, the action plan and next steps for achieving the community's goals. Over the course of three planning calls and workshop discussions, the community's goals evolved from

LOCAL FOODS, LOCAL PLACES STEERING COMMITTEE

Nathan Page, CZO - Planning Director, City of Graham

Ann Meletzke - Executive Director, Healthy Alamance

Jason Cox – Business owner and community advocate, The Co|Operative and "The Press" Coffee Shop

Brian Fisher – Restaurant owner, "The Verdict on the Square"

Jerry Peterman – Mayor, City of Graham

Figure 3 – Local Foods, Local Places Steering Committee in Graham, North Carolina

those in the initial request for technical assistance to the three shown later in this report. They reflect the holistic, collaborative approach to community development already underway in Graham, North Carolina.

Engagement

The technical assistance engagement process for Local Foods, Local Places has three phases, illustrated in Figure 4 below. The assessment phase consists of three preparation conference calls with the Steering Committee to establish the workshop goals, agenda, logistics, and stakeholder invitation lists. The convening phase includes the effort’s capstone event—a two-day workshop in the community. The next steps phase includes three follow up conference calls as well as process reporting and documentation.

The community workshop was held on May 11 and 12, 2017, and included a small lunch gathering with the Steering Committee members and regional, state, and federal partners; a tour of the community; and an evening community meeting at The Co|Operative in downtown Graham (Day 1); and an action-planning session, also at The Co|Operative (Day 2). The community meeting and all-day working session were well attended by key stakeholder groups, residents, and local leaders. The workshop sign-in sheets are provided in **Appendix B**.

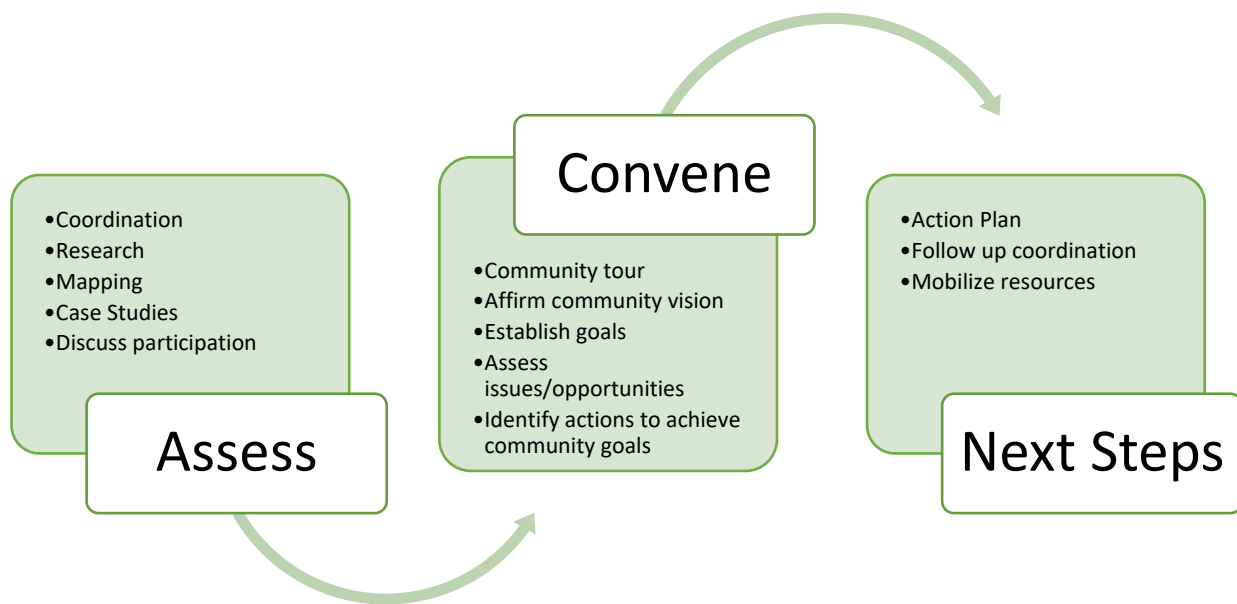


Figure 2 - Local Foods, Local Places Technical Assistance Process Diagram

Community Tour

The Local Foods, Local Places Steering Committee organized a lunch on May 11th with key stakeholders at The Verdict on the Square to introduce the project and the local leadership committee, consultants, and federal agency representatives. Following the luncheon, the Steering Committee led a tour of key places and projects in the downtown Graham area including the Oneida Mill multi-family redevelopment project, the Graham Historical Museum, the residential north edge of the downtown core, several downtown businesses, and historic downtown buildings undergoing renovation. The tour provided an overview of challenges and opportunities and allowed for informal discussions about how local foods can support Graham’s ongoing revitalization and place-making efforts. Several of the locations visited are shown in pictures here and in **Appendix C**.

Vision and Values

The first night of the workshop was attended by approximately 35 Graham residents, business owners, and several regional partners representing local, state and federal organizations and agencies. Graham Mayor Jerry Peterman and Nathan Page, Planning Director, city of Graham—and organizer of the Local Foods, Local Places Steering Committee—welcomed attendees to the event and spoke about the community’s ongoing efforts. Both outlined the goals of the workshop process as well as the larger, longer-term goals of the Steering Committee. The consulting team introduced the topics and program overview with a short presentation. Community members and other attendees were asked to write on index cards three challenges and three opportunities for building the local food system and bringing new life to downtown Graham. Those ideas are summarized in Figure 5 and presented in **Appendix D**.

The themes shared during the opportunities and challenges revealed many of the group’s aspirations for economic revitalization, improved health and healthy food access, entrepreneurship opportunities afforded by local foods, building community character, and increased communication between partner



CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Visions of Success:

- Vibrant
- Inclusive
- Mixed use
- Sustainable
- Lively
- Visitors
- Walkable
- Diverse
- Access
- Thriving
- Strong economy

Challenges:

- Low tax base
- Funding
- Lack of brand/ mission
- Fear of change
- Brain drain
- Vocal minority
- Outdated thinking/ ordinances/ policies
- Racial and ethnic divisions
- “Silent Sam” confederate memorial

Opportunities:

- Access to locally grown food
- Farmers market in downtown
- Infill opportunities
- Diverse population
- Uniqueness
- Partners
- “Downtown is not dead”
- Committed citizens
- Educate residents

Figure 5 - Workshop Participants’ summarized thoughts on the challenges and opportunities present in the local food system and downtown revitalization efforts.

organizations. It was against this positive, forward-thinking backdrop of values and visions for the future that the remainder of the workshop was convened. The first day concluded with a review of the workshop goals and discussion about the direction for action planning to follow the next day. These goals were further refined, evolving into the action plan implementation tables that are detailed at the end of this report. In addition to creating the action plan, the second day of the workshop included presentations of case studies by the consultant team covering economic development, building community capital, taking advantage of regional assets, food innovation districts, food business incubators, and farmers market best practices.

Action Plan

The culminating product of the workshop was a strategic action plan to guide implementation. The plan is organized around three goals and includes actions the participants brainstormed at the meeting and during follow-up calls. The action plan matrix helps to further clarify, prioritize, and define roles and responsibilities for moving forward on these actions. The goals and actions that are part of this plan are in full detail below. A list of funding resources (**Appendix E**) and references (**Appendix F**) are provided to aid the community in implementing the goals and actions.

GOAL 1: Create a more vibrant city center and enhance downtown walkability.

Downtown Graham is experiencing new investments and business activity, yet there are challenges to fully activating and energizing its compact downtown core. These challenges are infrastructural, relating to walkability, parking, and wayfinding; regulatory, relating to controversial existing and proposed ordinances; and perceptual, relating to Graham's lack of community identity and well-known character. Consistent within each of these challenges is a wide range of community attitudes on issues of change. Some community members are vocal proponents for new initiatives, new investment, and attracting new types of visitors and investors to Graham. Others in the community are hesitant to embrace changes that may alter the status quo. This goal reflects the workshop participants' desire to find a common ground around hot button issues, and to preserve what makes Graham a special place, while also moving towards capturing regional economic opportunities. Actions include gathering information and developing collaborative solutions to Graham's downtown issues, reflecting all stakeholders and promoting open dialogue.

Action 1.1: Survey residents, businesses, and downtown stakeholders about allowing temporary outdoor sales.	
What this is and why it is important	Current city ordinance prohibits virtually all temporary outdoor sales uses, thus preventing food trucks, pop up shops, outdoor art galleries, and other transient vendors from operating in Graham. In advance of a proposed ordinance change to allow certain temporary uses, this action provides data helping to inform the city's decisions.
Measure of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey 5% of Graham population (i.e. 750 residents)
Timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 weeks for initial informal survey • 1 - 2 years for longer-term needs assessment
Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co Operative

Action 1.1: Survey residents, businesses, and downtown stakeholders about allowing temporary outdoor sales.	
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Graham • Business owners • Graham Area Business Association • Stakeholders surveyed
Costs and/or resources needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff and volunteer time to administer and analyze surveys • Print materials for survey
Possible funding sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primarily contributions of time from partners

Action 1.2: Develop a downtown brand for Graham within a regional collaborative context.	
What this is and why it is important	<p>Workshop participants expressed that the city of Graham lacks a strong identity. Creating a brand for the city supports the next steps in downtown development by developing character, facilitating consistent marketing, building stakeholder buy-in for downtown initiatives, and stimulating greater investment.</p> <p>It was also noted that existing regional branding and marketing efforts could be integrated with a Graham branding campaign and that inclusion of neighboring towns and regional partners could enhance the long-term success of a branding strategy.</p>
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in branding process • Creation of a broadly supported brand for Graham • Integration and inclusion of regional partners and voices
Timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 - 12 months
Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graham Area Business Association • City of Graham • Co Operative
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents • Destination Downtown in Mebane • Non-Graham Area Business Association business owners • Alamance County Visitors Bureau • Burlington Downtown Corporation as example
Costs and/or resources needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time for stakeholder participation • Contractor costs for branding/marketing consultant, scope TBD
Possible funding sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholders and residents to contribute time • Source for branding consultant fees (TBD) • City of Graham, as a component of a Main Street District development initiative • Local graduate student project as resource contribution

Action 1.3: Support creation of a new wayfinding system for downtown Graham by compiling a list of destinations and resources, and by drafting a scope and budget for this new system.	
What this is and why it is important	<p>A wayfinding system could promote more walking traffic among visitors and residents and would help bring visibility to Graham's many downtown assets.</p> <p>To effectively move forward with a new wayfinding system, key information will be needed. This action will identify downtown assets to include in a wayfinding system, scope, and budget.</p>
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A list and/or map of assets in downtown Graham, with GIS data included for each asset • A scope and budget for a wayfinding system
Timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0 - 6 months
Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Graham
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graham Area Business Association • North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) • Alamance Arts
Costs and/or resources needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salary/staff time: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Survey downtown places and stakeholders ○ Create scope and budget for wayfinding system • Resident time to crowdsource asset lists
Possible funding sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graham Area Business Association • Alamance Arts • Residents - social media/crowdfunding

Action 1.4: Complete a feasibility study for pop-up business spaces in downtown Graham.	
What this is and why it is important	<p>Many downtown Graham buildings are vacant, but the costs of developing them into new business space or storefronts can be prohibitive for new and start-up businesses. In response to traditionally high start-up costs, city stakeholders are interested in business incubation opportunities that lower thresholds to entry, such as a program to promote pop-up shops and flexible business space in downtown. This action creates the information needed to decide whether to move ahead with such a program.</p>
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of a focused feasibility study • Budget for a city-supported pop-up shop program
Timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0-6 months
Lead	<p>This could be an intern project, potentially involving one or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graham Area Business Association • City of Graham • Alamance Arts • Co Operative

Action 1.4: Complete a feasibility study for pop-up business spaces in downtown Graham.	
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Downtown property owners • Elon University • Alamance Community College • Career and Technical Center: Alamance Burlington School System
Costs and/or resources needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intern time • Supervision time
Possible funding sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TBD

Action 1.5: Review existing pedestrian plan and assess current needs.	
What this is and why it is important	<p>Explore opportunities to develop pedestrian improvements as recommended in the 2006 Pedestrian Master Plan, using alternative submission or construction approaches that rely on NCDOT for in-house resources or leadership. Many improvements, if led by the city of Graham, can be prohibitively expensive because of their location within NCDOT rights-of-ways, yet they are important to create a walkable, connected downtown core that links to the greenway system.</p> <p>Reviewing and assessing the existing plan (completed in 12/2006), working with NCDOT on alternative construction approaches, and developing alternative submission and construction approaches will allow more pedestrian infrastructure projects to be completed.</p>
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation of the existing pedestrian plan • Launching of pedestrian infrastructure projects at manageable costs to city
Timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 - 12 months
Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Graham
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Downtown property owners • NCDOT
Costs and/or resources needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff Time
Possible funding sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Graham • NCDOT

GOAL 2: Strengthen pathways between producers and consumers of local foods, including local restaurants and institutions.

Local food initiatives can support Graham's desired downtown revitalization. The community and economic development benefits of local food initiatives allow the city to take advantage of multiple new partnerships, regional economic trends, and community health opportunities. By choosing to directly support the pathways between local producers and consumers, Graham can support broader goals of strengthening local and regional economic activity, improving fresh food access, and developing a sense of place in downtown.

Action 2.1: Conduct a feasibility study for a downtown farmers market.	
What this is and why it is important	<p>A farmers market in downtown Graham is a potential multiple-benefit project that could increase direct-to-consumer food sales, increase visitor traffic to stores downtown, provide an exciting event to bring people downtown, contribute to the branding effort in Action 1.2, and increase food access for low-income residents living in proximity to downtown.</p> <p>A feasibility study is an important planning step before committing to the costs of launching a new market. This type of study ideally includes recommendations on the market type, hours, best location, market base and potential farm participation, and likelihood of sponsoring partners. It could also consider the context of other regional farmers markets, focusing on the potential effects a Graham market could have on the existing market in Burlington, and whether the local customer base can support an additional market.</p> <p>This action should include feasibility questions around community health outcomes, geographic food access needs, and fresh food incentive programs. This step will incorporate data findings from Action 3.1 into the farmers market feasibility study.</p>
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public participation in planning for a downtown farmers market • Inclusion of local farmers in planning and feasibility study (could form a farmer focus group) • Completion of feasibility study • Inclusion of community health and food access measures into market recommendations
Timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0-6 months (market could open April 2018)
Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Graham Planning Department • Unidentified community champion
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthy Alamance • USDA • North Carolina State University (with help from Healthy Alamance)
Costs and/or resources needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost of feasibility study by consultant (may be \$10,000 to \$20,000) • Staff time • \$7,500 for a shared-cost regional market manager

Action 2.1: Conduct a feasibility study for a downtown farmers market.

Possible funding sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible North Carolina State University partnership • City of Graham general funds • Grants from USDA
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Action 2.2: Advance progress towards a local food collection and distribution site for hunger relief organizations, to be located at Scott Mebane Mill.

What this is and why it is important	<p>This action focuses the community’s energy on improving the local hunger relief system through coordination at a centrally-located, underutilized building. Graham has an elevated poverty rate and many residents are food insecure. Improving the hunger relief system could have a positive impact on the number of meals served and the cost per meal, potentially increasing food access. Additionally, a centralized Graham location might direct more local farm seconds, remainders, or gleaned produce to local food banks and food pantries. Finally, the food distribution activity might help revitalize and reactivate underused and vacant mill buildings.</p> <p>The Scott Mebane Mill is being explored as a potential food distribution location; the viability of this site and the details of an operational model need to be further defined.</p> <p>This action might also include exploration of a mixed-use food hub concept supporting charitable food supply chains as well as wholesale and retail food distribution. A mixed model could allow mutually-supportive aggregation activities, access to more funding opportunities (such as the USDA’s Community Facilities Fund), and direct support for Graham’s restaurants and a farm-to-fork movement.</p>
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A meeting of stakeholders has been planned and held, with successful outcomes • Key feasibility questions for a facility have been answered, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What is the minimum size that could support the needs of projected food bank tenants? ○ Verify Food Bank of Central NC as the potential operators or managers of the facility ○ Verify Food Bank of Central NC as the primary developer interested in building the facility • Developed and shared a concept for the facility with potential developers and operators
Timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0-3 months to convene stakeholders and create concept
Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • United Way (April Durr)

Action 2.2: Advance progress towards a local food collection and distribution site for hunger relief organizations, to be located at Scott Mebane Mill.	
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hunger relief organizations • County health officials • Healthy Alamance Food Collaborative • City of Graham Planning Department • Graham Presbyterian Church • Allied Church • Salvation Army • Renaissance Planning Group
Costs and/or resources needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time to plan meeting • Fee for a professional facilitator to reach meeting outcomes • Time of partners to create the concept proposal to share with potential developers and operators of facility, as well as funders
Possible funding sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-kind donations from partners of meeting time and concept proposal development • Limited scope pro bono meeting facilitation or project planning by Alan Steinbeck of Renaissance Planning

Action 2.3: Assess the economic impact of Graham's investments in local food projects and initiatives.	
What this is and why it is important	<p>Using USDA's Economics of Local Food Systems Toolkit as a guide, the city and other partners can examine the economic impact of various local food projects to assess the value in moving them forward. These projects could then be next phase investments following the development of a farmers market, which was identified as a priority action (Action 2.1).</p> <p>Several inter-related ideas and activities were suggested that fall broadly into an area of economic development through local food projects. A farmers market feasibility study requires a level of economic and market impact analysis, but other ideas such as a food hub, a food innovation district, shared space for commercial food processing, a food truck commissary, or a locally grown branding campaign may warrant further exploration as well.</p>
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team from city and other partners work through USDA Economics of Local Food Systems toolkit • Creation of informed recommendations for local food projects such as a food hub, food innovation district, food truck commissary, etc., with clear Graham-specific definitions of local food projects
Timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 - 12 months
Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TBD, possibly city of Graham

Action 2.3: Assess the economic impact of Graham's investments in local food projects and initiatives.	
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carolina Farm Stewardship Association • Local university research projects • Healthy Alamance Food Collaborative • Local restaurants and food businesses • Alamance Cooperative Extension • Grocery industry, looking to partners such as Lowes Foods or Lidl
Costs and/or resources needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff and partner time • Student and faculty research support
Possible funding sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USDA • In-kind support from CFSA and local universities

Action 2.4: Increase farmer and restaurant membership in the Healthy Alamance Food Collaborative.	
What this is and why it is important	<p>The Healthy Alamance Food Collaborative is a vital resource for Alamance County—including Graham—as the momentum around food projects increases. To maintain viability and impact, the Food Collaborative must keep an active and diverse membership. These voices are crucial for both long-term relevance and the ability to advocate for—and initiate—actions that benefit Graham's local food economy and community. Graham leaders can encourage membership from partners and constituents, with special attention to farmers and restaurant owners as important voices in local food development.</p>
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active members in the Food Collaborative • Inclusion of farmers and restaurant owners among the Food Collaborative membership • Advocacy for the Food Collaborative among Graham leaders and city officials
Timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0 - 6 months
Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthy Alamance Food Collaborative
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Graham leadership
Costs and/or resources needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low-cost marketing campaign, primarily through word of mouth, with 2-3 supporting flyers or invitations
Possible funding sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TBD, cost should be negligible

Action 2.5: Build more effective “farm-to-fork” activity by sharing resources, increasing communication among food system partners, and promoting farm-to-fork efforts.	
What this is and why it is important	<p>“Farm-to-fork” initiatives expand the customer base and market available to local farmers and build greater awareness for local farm issues and activity. By increasing the viability of more local food purchases by restaurants, farm-to-fork initiatives expand the restaurant industry’s demand for locally produced food.</p> <p>This action supports the Healthy Alamance Food Collaborative Strategic Plan by growing a farm-to-fork community of resource for farmers, restaurants, and others in Graham and Alamance County by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing a central information resource on local food sourcing and marketing. • Developing shared communications such as a listserv forum or newsletter that connects restaurants, farmers, distributors, and interested consumers.
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifiable point of contact for farm-to-fork questions or technical advice • Creation of a shared communication system and regular communications
Timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0 - 6 months
Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthy Alamance Food Collaborative and partners
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graham restaurants • Graham Area Business Association • Emerging farmers market leadership
Costs and/or resources needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff time to answer questions, distribute resources, and maintain communications
Possible funding sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-kind contribution of time from current partners with aligned roles and responsibilities

GOAL 3: Support connections between access to fresh local food and improved health outcomes.

Graham faces several food-related challenges including a high poverty rate, food deserts, and the association of these factors with poor health outcomes. But there are economic and community development opportunities in connecting local food systems to food access initiatives. Effective fresh food access programs often combine established models, best practices, and place-specific modifications that strategically take advantage of existing partners, available resources, and momentum. Healthy Alamance, a county-based community health collaborative, is a core partner with collaborative networks and established projects in local food access. Actions build on the opportunity to raise public awareness about the high poverty rates in Graham and harness the momentum of Healthy Alamance's work and the community's expressed interest in a downtown farmers market.

Action 3.1: Identify Graham’s food insecure populations at the block group and neighborhood level.	
What this is and why it is important	A GIS map showing neighborhood-scale variations in food and economic need across Graham will help establish and clearly demonstrate a baseline of need in the community, provide geographic starting points for interventions around 'hot spot' neighborhoods, and might provide justification for further action and fundraising. It also provides an important opportunity to inform and educate community leaders about critical food needs in Graham.
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Map to visualize issues at the neighborhood or block group level • Brief report to accompany map with discussion and conclusions
Timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0 - 6 months if staff or partner organization time is available: quick completion of this action will allow inclusion in feasibility study of farmers market (Action 3.3)
Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graham Planning
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthy Alamance • Alamance County GIS • Elon University GIS • Alamance County Soil and Water
Costs and/or resources needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If in-house or in-kind, nominal costs (primarily contributions of time) • If contracted out, approximately \$5,000
Possible resources or funding sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Piedmont Data Hub • City of Graham

Action 3.2: Connect a Graham retail food market with the Cone Health Fresh Food Prescription Pilot Project.	
What this is and why it is important	This action takes advantage of existing pilot project design and implementation in other parts of Alamance County, bringing an evidence-based food security project to Graham. The fresh food prescription pilot project, focusing on youth, might help prevent childhood obesity and support improved health outcomes. The key to this action is connecting a Graham market with the pilot program organizers. In a fresh food prescription program, doctors prescribe the regular purchase and consumption of fruits and vegetables to their patients, who then fill their prescriptions at a partner market that offers fresh food purchase incentives with third-party funding support through the program.
Measures of success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilization rates of prescription program • Pre- and post-participation surveys to assess success of pilot program in changing fresh food purchase and consumption behavior
Timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0 - 6 months
Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthy Alamance

Action 3.2: Connect a Graham retail food market with the Cone Health Fresh Food Prescription Pilot Project.	
Supporting cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthy Alamance Food Collaborative • City of Graham Parks and Recreation • Healthy Alamance Wellness Collaborative • City of Graham business community
Costs and/or resources needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$2,000 to fund "Double Bucks" fresh food incentive program at partner market
Possible funding sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SNAP program is essential financial foundation for low-income participation • Local foundations • Individual donations • Non-profit contributions

Additional Action Ideas

The action plan above represents the efforts at the workshop to detail top priority actions. In addition to these actions, several additional actions were brought up during the brainstorming process that Graham may consider pursuing in the future as well. They are listed here for future reference.

GOAL 1: Create a more vibrant city center and enhance downtown walkability.

- Improve walking and biking routes to markets and downtown bicycle infrastructure.
- Decrease the number of used car lots in downtown.
- Create pop-up programs for Elon University and Alamance Community College Arts Departments, Culinary Programs, and Graphic Design.
- Increase greenways.

Goal 2: Strengthen pathways between producers and consumers of local foods, including local restaurants and institutions.

- Develop program with Alamance Community College to use more fresh local produce in prepared foods.
- Create or expand local food branding and marketing campaigns, such as an "Alamance Grown" brand.
- Host a gathering of farmers, distributors, and vendors to build relationships and steps towards collaborative strategies for expanding local food markets.
- Assess creative ways to create food truck commissary resources, such as a network of existing commercial kitchens.

GOAL 3: Support connections between access to fresh local food and improved health outcomes.

- Connect fresh food projects and initiatives with the Alamance County School System.
- Survey downtown pedestrians to assess health and food access concerns among Graham residents.

Implementation and Next Steps

Three post-workshop conference calls were held during May, June, and July 2017, following the workshop. The calls were held with the Local Foods, Local Places Steering Committee and a few additional stakeholders whose interest was cultivated during the workshop. They worked to refine the action plan and add clarifying language. Some of the key actions and post-workshop developments included the following:

- There was a meeting with the dean of Elon Business School for guidance and to discuss possibilities for collaboration (Graham/Alamance County food businesses).
- Graham City Council made the decision to allow temporary sales (including food trucks) to operate with no restrictions while part of a city-sanctioned event.

Appendices

- Appendix A – Community Data Profile
- Appendix B – Workshop Sign-in Sheets
- Appendix C – Workshop Photo Album
- Appendix D – Workshop Feedback—Assets Map and Community Meeting Feedback
- Appendix E – Funding Sources
- Appendix F – References