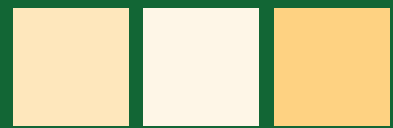


DAWSON SPRINGS



Looking Forward

A Strategic Plan for Dawson Springs
2012



Acknowledgements

Dawson Springs City Council

Jenny Sewell, Interim Mayor

Ray Bochert

Chasidy Chappell

Rick Hendrickson

Rhonda Mills

Kenny Mitchell

Kenny Thomas

Dawson Springs Steering Committee

Jenny Sewell, Interim Mayor

Rhonda Mills, Councilmember

Dwight Seymore, Business Owner and President of West Hopkins Industry

Rob Linton, Fire Chief

Bill Crider, Police Chief

Jahn Smiley, Water and Sewer

Virginia Chaney, Historic Commission

Janet Dunbar, City Clerk

Steven Parker, Housing Authority, and Chair of City Water and Sewer Commission

Charlie Beshears, Hopkins County Magistrate

John Rogers, Planning and Zoning Representative

Dawson Springs City Staff

Dawson Springs Community Center

Earl Menser, Website Assistance

Laura Bowman, KLC Intern, Research Analyst

Steve Austin, SdA& Associates Community Planning and Design

Women on the Edge Trail Riders

A very special thanks to **Charlie Beshears** for sharing many photographs of the local community.

Introduction



In the spring of 2012, the mayor and council of the City of Dawson Springs, Ky., agreed to engage their citizens in the creation of a strategic plan. The goal of the process was to bring the community together so that they could agree on a few common areas for community improvement. They asked the Kentucky League of Cities to guide them through the creation of the plan.

The Process

The residents were given the following opportunities to participate in the creation of the plan.

- ◆ A steering committee comprised of local citizens was established to provide guidance throughout the process.
- ◆ A community listening session was held on May 7, 2012. A SWOT analysis was conducted to identify strengths, weaknesses

Citizen Priorities

- ◆ Job creation – business and tourism development
- ◆ Residential cleanup and fix-up
- ◆ Develop market-rate housing
- ◆ Promotions and communications
- ◆ Downtown improvements

opportunities and threats within the community.

- ◆ A community design session was held on June 4, 2012. Participants were given maps, pictures, pens, markers and Post-it notes to create a visual image of improvements that were needed.

Introduction

Core Values

Through these events, the core values of the community emerged. They include:

- ◆ Pride in the Dawson Springs Independent Schools
- ◆ Local history
- ◆ Friendliness of the community
- ◆ Abundance of natural resources

Community Concerns

The residents identified some challenges that concerned them including:

- ◆ Lack of job opportunities
- ◆ Deteriorating properties
- ◆ Overall appearance of the community

Community Opportunities

- ◆ Become a Trail Town Center
- ◆ Install entrance signage and trail head signage
- ◆ Expand housing stock

- ◆ Business creation and retention
- ◆ Improve the downtown
- ◆ Create a marketing campaign for a regional and national audience
- ◆ Create an entrepreneurship center in partnership with Murray State University

Existing Considerations

- ◆ Population declined 7.25% over the past decade
- ◆ Single parent households 5% higher than national average
- ◆ High rental property rates
- ◆ Low educational attainment
- ◆ Lack of a qualified labor force
- ◆ Underdeveloped industrial capacity, maintenance and promotion
- ◆ Median income is \$14,427 below the national average
- ◆ Aging population (nearly 20% are age 65 or older)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau's American Fact Finder



What Citizens Said

Design Charrette Results

- ◆ Focus on downtown
- ◆ Need a hotel
- ◆ City park – oval-shaped track – develop center for kids
- ◆ Signage at all four entrances
- ◆ Small businesses downtown
- ◆ Property on Water Street – public parking developed
- ◆ Need something in the Spec Building
- ◆ Housing – need multi-family housing, condos (lake in center), adult community, retirement community (amenities in place), market-rate housing
- ◆ 40 acres that could be developed next to 4H Camp
- ◆ Trails to connect three parks in city – benches, exercise stations
- ◆ Return to health-oriented community – hike, walk, kayak
- ◆ Fix up city park – posters, banners, signage
- ◆ Fast-food/drive-in restaurants
- ◆ Loosen alcohol sales laws, restaurant seating requirements, Sunday sales, liquor-by-the-drink
- ◆ Water park for kids – water features
- ◆ I-69 Corridor – infrastructure on other side of interstate before it is developed
- ◆ Motels/hotels out by parkway
- ◆ Infrastructure needs to be addressed
- ◆ City garage needs a facelift
- ◆ Building on corner needs to be torn down
- ◆ Need to paint, cleanup
- ◆ New housing – losing middle-income people – not enough market-rate housing to take care of needs
- ◆ Identify areas that are not in floodplain that could be developed (housing)
- ◆ Walkability, things to do – recognized as retirement community – identify rating categories and work on becoming certified
- ◆ Bike loop – Friends of the Pennyrile – bike loop needed
- ◆ Bottled water, vitamin water, energy drinks – identify investors and develop and market
- ◆ Entrepreneurial center in Dawson Springs (partner with Murray State)
- ◆ Downtown second-story housing
- ◆ Bike shop – in Hayes Hardware building
- ◆ Sports center/Ag center in Spec Building – rodeos, horse shows, bike shows
- ◆ Park-to-Park Trail – Pennyrile Nature Trail, Riverside Park, and City Park (five-mile trail with existing sidewalks)



What Citizens Said



Strengths of Dawson Springs

- ◆ People, volunteers, local clubs
- ◆ Cooperative city employees
- ◆ Progressive leadership
- ◆ School system
- ◆ History museum
- ◆ Local newspaper
- ◆ Location
- ◆ Hometown of the governor
- ◆ Pennyrile Forest
- ◆ Low-cost electric
- ◆ Airport
- ◆ I-69
- ◆ Hiking trails
- ◆ Reasonable property tax
- ◆ Tradewater River
- ◆ Railroad access
- ◆ Coal severance
- ◆ Recycling
- ◆ Farming
- ◆ Downtown
- ◆ Service businesses

- ◆ Farmers market
- ◆ Dollar Store
- ◆ Swimming pool
- ◆ Churches
- ◆ Grocery
- ◆ Community center
- ◆ DAPS (food bank)
- ◆ Nursing homes (employs a lot of people)

Weaknesses

- ◆ Eroding tax base
- ◆ Loss of work force
- ◆ Wastewater treatment facility
- ◆ No money for economic development
- ◆ Lack of major employer
- ◆ Ordinances in regards to housing, abandoned cars, business, etc.
- ◆ Marketing
- ◆ Dying population
- ◆ No mall
- ◆ Prices and competitive businesses
- ◆ One chain restaurant
- ◆ Roads need to be repaired
- ◆ Lack of entertainment
- ◆ Poor housing
- ◆ Lack of maintained housing
- ◆ Employment situation
- ◆ Shopping
- ◆ Not enough interested citizens
- ◆ Lack of parking
- ◆ No room for expansion

What Citizens Said

- ◆ Cosmetics of the city
- ◆ Not enough civic mindedness
- ◆ Floodplain
- ◆ We are in the southwest corner of Green River tourism group; need to be in one more similar to us
- ◆ More directional and informational signs
- ◆ Not a county seat
- ◆ People don't know what we have, see the exit but don't stop
- ◆ Need off season opportunities
- ◆ Government housing does not add to tax base
- ◆ Lack of young families staying - give them something to stay for
- ◆ Limited public access to Lake Beshear

Opportunities

- ◆ Motels
- ◆ Develop tourism
- ◆ Lower cost of living
- ◆ Low housing cost
- ◆ Opportunity to be regional infrastructure provider
- ◆ Revitalize downtown
- ◆ Industrial park
- ◆ Real estate
- ◆ Annual barbeque
- ◆ Vacant warehouses
- ◆ Youth center
- ◆ Renovate outdoor pool to indoor
- ◆ Adult vocational education
- ◆ Need available good housing



- ◆ Rental properties
- ◆ Assisted living facility
- ◆ More restaurants and shopping
- ◆ Advertising
- ◆ Great school system
- ◆ Expand medical services
- ◆ Adventure tourism

Threats

- ◆ Attitudes
- ◆ Regulations, federal and state
- ◆ Absentee ownership
- ◆ Loss of business
- ◆ Nonaction or failure to change
- ◆ Abandoned properties
- ◆ Losing younger citizens
- ◆ School closing
- ◆ I don't care
- ◆ Losing state park
- ◆ Availability of funding
- ◆ Enthusiasm

Community Strategies: Leadership Development



Dawson Springs must find ways to increase the size of the local leadership pool. In addition to identifying potential leaders, you must also find persons to mentor the new leaders. We recommend a two-pronged approach.

Adult Strategy

Identify at least 10 people in the community who have leadership potential. They need to be from a broad cross-section of the community: long-timers, young, middle-aged, seniors and newcomers. Try to think of people that are not already involved in a civic organization, seek untapped energy.

Identify the decision making government and existing civic organizations (Rotary Club for example) that require leaders. Work with those entities to get their involvement. Enlist their help as you “on board” new people to assist in community service work.

Work with Madisonville Community College, MSU or PADD to provide formal training to newly identified leaders about their role and responsibilities when serving on a board, or in executive leadership and public service. Having a solid curriculum will provide practical experiences in decision making and consensus building.

Provide each leader with information about the community’s plans for the future. Explain what

needs to be accomplished. Ask them to get their organization on board to support the community’s collective plans – pick a project and work towards accomplishment.

Ask existing board members to mentor or adopt a new recruit. Provide input during meetings, help explain processes and expectations and most of all, encourage the new person to get involved and remain active.

Youth Strategy

- ◆ Create a Youth Leadership Development Program in order to get local youth involved in the Trail Town concept and future community service work. See the community’s youth as an undeveloped resource.
- ◆ Approach the local school board about working in partnership with Madisonville Community College, MSU or PADD to provide formal training focused on youth. Make this civics instruction part of the high school’s extracurricular offering.



Community Strategies: Leadership Development

- ◆ As students obtain training, integrate them into the community's strategic plan. Set up workshops at school to encourage students' interests.
 - Determine what portion of the strategic plan might be of interest to young adults as well as other adults in the community.
 - Identify youth and other existing organizations in which work might get accomplished.
 - Share the city's plans for the future, and explain how they can be involved.
 - Invite them to step up and participate – it is, after all, about attracting jobs for the future.
- Start out with a project that is fairly easy to complete - such as helping to maintain existing trails, identifying new trails, providing guided tours, and teaching skills such as how to use a GPS, compass, kayak or canoe.
- Provide adult mentoring through the process to keep students on the right track.
- Take before and after pictures to show result of the work.
- Say thank you and celebrate successes.
- Pick another project and get back to work.



Community Strategies: Neighborhood Development

The housing issues in Dawson Springs are complex and will take time to work through. There are several steps, and a layered approach is recommended.

Develop an overall plan of action that addresses short-term and long-term goals for cleaning up the community and addressing existing and future housing needs.

Short-term Recommendations

Recognize property owners for taking care of their properties – find a way to publicly acknowledge residential improvements such as painting or fixing up homes and yards.

Work with local newspapers to show before/after photos of areas that have been cleaned up.

Investigate neighborhood associations and determine if this is an approach for Dawson Springs. The Internet provides many successful examples and these links may be helpful:

- ◆ www.neighborhoodlink.com/article/Association/How_To_Start_Association
- ◆ www.charleston-sc.gov/dept/content.aspx?nid=191

Evaluate city-owned properties and determine if the city is setting a good example.

Work with students, church and civic groups to conduct neighborhood cleanup events. Offer refreshments, provide trash bags and gloves. Make it a fun event, perhaps a competition between neighborhoods.

Evaluate existing codes and ordinances; adjust as needed to encourage compliance.



Long-term Recommendations

Work with the city attorney to identify properties with delinquent property taxes and initiate liens and/or foreclosure actions for unpaid taxes.

Invite representatives from Kentucky Housing Corporation to the community to help assess the current housing situation and provide recommendations.

Seek a planning grant to pay for the preparation of a housing study to evaluate the housing market in the community and assess its housing needs, particularly related to market-rate housing.

Community Strategies: Neighborhood Development



Work with the Kentucky Housing Corporation or the Pennyriple Area Development District to conduct a housing inventory to:

- ◆ Identify properties that need attention and devise a step-by-step plan on how to proceed.
- ◆ Work with local realtors to determine current needs and what future opportunities may exist for additional housing.
- ◆ Identify potential properties for market-rate housing opportunities.
- ◆ Determine if senior housing, apartments or patio homes may be needed.
- ◆ Consider potential upper story opportunities as well as properties within the community that could be adapted for new use. (Former warehouses for example.)
- ◆ Investigate Scholar House concept as an alternative housing option.

Evaluate annexation opportunities that provide additional areas within the community that are conducive for new home construction.

Work with community partners (such as the Rotary Club, Garden Club, Homemakers, Business and

Professional Women, Chamber of Commerce, and Main Street Committee) to address chronic maintenance concerns. Inform these groups of the city's efforts to address these concerns and solicit their assistance.

Investigate the use of the Repair Affair concept and the use of volunteers to assist property owners, particularly the elderly and disabled, who are unable to care for their own properties. See examples of Repair Affair activities in other Kentucky cities by typing in Repair Affair in the Internet search engine.

Partner with local banks and/or KCTCS or Murray State University to offer free training on home-ownership and maintenance.

- ◆ Content may include information about loans, home maintenance, understanding a real estate contract, and homeowners insurance.

Community Strategies: Downtown Improvements



The center part of town is perfectly situated to serve as the Trail Town Center. Even in the heyday of mineral baths, the Veterans Park area was used as a promenade for visitors to meet and greet. We recommend that this concept continue.

For ideas of what might be possible for Dawson Springs to become more like a Trail Town, visit Trail Town cities such as Damascus, Virginia, for a thriving example.

The big selling point for the city of Damascus is the Creeper Trail. Out of town guests and all outdoor enthusiasts start their adventure in the downtown area. Downtown Damascus offers several rental and shuttling services for tourists who want to participate in the fun but do not have the equipment. These businesses charge separate fees for rentals and shuttles because most enthusiasts who have bikes still need a ride to the top.

In the short term, work on initiatives in the downtown that are easy to accomplish such as:

- ◆ Pick up trash
- ◆ Wash windows and decorate if permissions and access are possible
- ◆ Run electricity to the gazebo
- ◆ Plant flowers or greenery and keep everything watered and trimmed properly
- ◆ Erect poles on either side of the street for banners
- ◆ Clear weeds from sidewalks
- ◆ Identify where sidewalks may need repair – work with the city to repair and upgrade over time

Community Strategies: Downtown Improvements

Use the rivalry among high school classes to initiate a downtown cleanup campaign. Use classroom instruction to educate students about the importance of town centers. Organize an annual event such as the Clash of Classes where each class is given a section of town to work on.

Offer rewards for different elements such as most improved, most innovative or most citizen involvement. Take before and after pictures; involve the media; and say thank you.

While these efforts are underway, host a Trail Town – Our Town Meet and Greet.

- ◆ Invite property and business owners to a meeting in order to explain the Trail Town concept. Have the meeting in a neutral location (school cafeteria or restaurant), and provide snacks and beverages.
- ◆ Talk with residents about the types of businesses needed in a Trail Town. Show pictures from other successful Trail Towns. Provide a list of potential businesses to be considered.
- ◆ Encourage local people to become entrepreneurs to offer the types of businesses needed for a Trail Town.
- ◆ Work with Madisonville Community College or Murray State University to offer classes on how to start a small business.
- ◆ Work with local banks to explain the community's plan and potential business ventures.

Work with Main Street Committee to:

- ◆ Identify appropriate places for horse-related needs. Is there a location for horses to be tethered, watered, or sheltered? What about



the needs of other target audiences such as bicycle and canoe enthusiasts? Where will tourists park?

- ◆ Assess existing downtown ordinances and determine if they are Trail Town friendly. Can horses be tethered in the downtown? Can you have food and entertainment on sidewalks? Seek example ordinances from other Trail Town communities.
- ◆ Work with economic partners to develop an incentive program for property and business owners.
- ◆ Help business owners with opportunities for joint marketing, special events and coordinated hours.

Community Strategies: Job Creations

Trail Town

Many residents of Dawson Springs envision the city becoming a designated Trail Town USA community. This tourism concept is already well underway and provides positive growth and job potential. Input from residents during the planning process suggests some additional ideas to consider as part of the overall Trail Town concept.



Connectivity

As the downtown is the town center, we propose the city consider how everything related to neighborhoods, business, industry, recreation, and the trail system might emanate from this center point. Give thought to each trail head access point and how it connects to the downtown Trail Town Center. There is an internal and external part to this strategy.

For Example:

Internal: Sidewalks connect residents to schools, to parks, to businesses downtown and along the main thoroughfares. City services are already available in the downtown.

External: Roads, sidewalks or bike paths connect tourists from the town center to all trail heads. Provide a tourist information location in the downtown. By offering trail amenities needed by tourists within the center of town, customers are brought directly to local businesses.

Trail Head

At the intersection of 109 and 62 create a trail head specifically for the equine trail enthusiasts. Ample space is needed for large trailers to park and for animals to move about without risk of injury. Use the existing industrial building to make public restrooms available and offer trail and local services information for the equine tourists. Work with enthusiasts to define appropriate uses for the size of the building. For example, the Industrial Authority could rent the facility as a show barn, rodeo, or an entertainment venue. See a drawing of this concept on pages 14 and 15.

Trail Town Center

The citizens of Dawson Springs should work to ensure that all visitors to the region use the downtown as the hub of all activity. Visitors to downtown could get trail and activity information, obtain supplies and training, collect crafts, hear musical performances, watch show horses work, eat a great meal outside or in, park their trailers and even pasture their horses. Upper floors of downtown buildings could be converted into bed-and-breakfast businesses.

See a conceptual drawing on pages 16 and 17.

Job Creation

Entrepreneurs in the area should offer products and services affiliated with your target audiences. For example, if you're targeting equine trail riders, businesses to consider recruiting might include:

- ◆ Laundry mat – also offering horse laundry needs (blankets)
- ◆ Farrier or blacksmith
- ◆ Tack shop – tanner, leather goods – boots, belts, saddles, bridles, etc.
- ◆ Feed store

Community Strategies: Job Creations

- ◆ Veterinarian
- ◆ Coffee shop with free Wi-Fi
- ◆ Livery – trail drop-off and pick-up service
- ◆ Lodging options for trail users
- ◆ Outdoor, recreation, sport supplies and gear
- ◆ Camp dining service – pre-arranged meals delivered to campsites
- ◆ Bath house – hot water, fresh towels, soap, and shampoo
- ◆ Trail guide, camp cook, and activity instructor

Each target audience will require its own supporting services. While many needs will be alike, it is important to know the commonalities and prepare for those that are lacking. Spend time thinking through each audience's activity (mountain biking, road biking, canoeing/kayaking, ATV, backpacking and camping) and develop a plan and supporting service list for each target audience.

Ancillary to this Trail Town Center concept is the need to prepare the community and local residents for the arrival of tourists. For instance:

- ◆ Safe and sanitary public restrooms and bathing facilities should be made available if not provided by local business owners.
- ◆ Hospitality training for service providers is also highly recommended. Work with the offices of Kentucky Tourism to solicit their assistance and advice. Encourage businesses such as gas stations, liquor stores, and mini-marts to participate by sending their frontline staff to the training.
- ◆ Explore the idea of a volunteer trail ranger program for locals to serve as ambassadors for the town. (Check out Paducah's Red Coats

as an example of this concept – get ideas from them on how to go about implementing.)

- ◆ Daily trail maintenance will be paramount to a good experience for trail users. From waste collection and clearing debris, a well thought-out plan for ongoing trail use is critical.
- ◆ Develop emergency preparedness and contingency plans and get them in place before promoting the trails.

Recommendation: Be Big, Bold and Visible

To date a relatively small group of dedicated volunteers have been working towards trail development. We believe the sooner the trail initiative is recognized as a viable tourism destination and job creator, the sooner the community will meet with success.

Get to Work

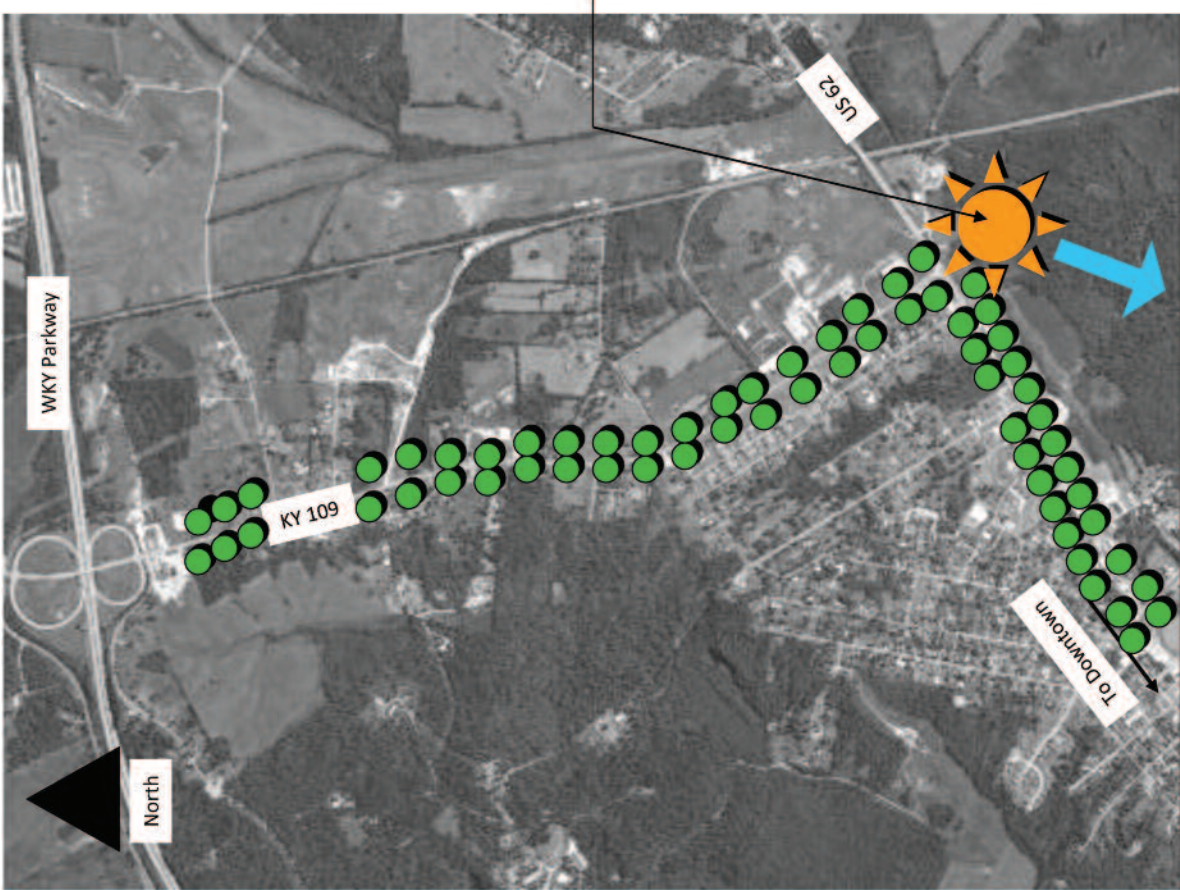
- ◆ Educate others in the community about the Trail Town concept.
- ◆ Solicit their participation.
- ◆ Give people a specific job – ask them to help with specific tasks such as making signs, clearing or building trails, keeping the trails clean, or serving as a trail ranger.
- ◆ Get the website up and keep it fresh – market and promote what you have.
- ◆ Look at other Trail Town websites and adopt ideas that will work for Dawson Springs.
- ◆ Work with Kentucky Tourism and find out how they can help promote this concept.
- ◆ Work with the Kentucky Department of Parks for trail signage and cross promotion.

Community Strategies: Job Creations

Entry Concept: The community should strive to create an inviting entry into town and the surrounding recreational activities. One way to do this is through a coordinated tree planting plan which would place shade trees along the route in from the parkway. Another important component would be a system of wayfinding signs that will point visitors clearly in the directions they wish to go.

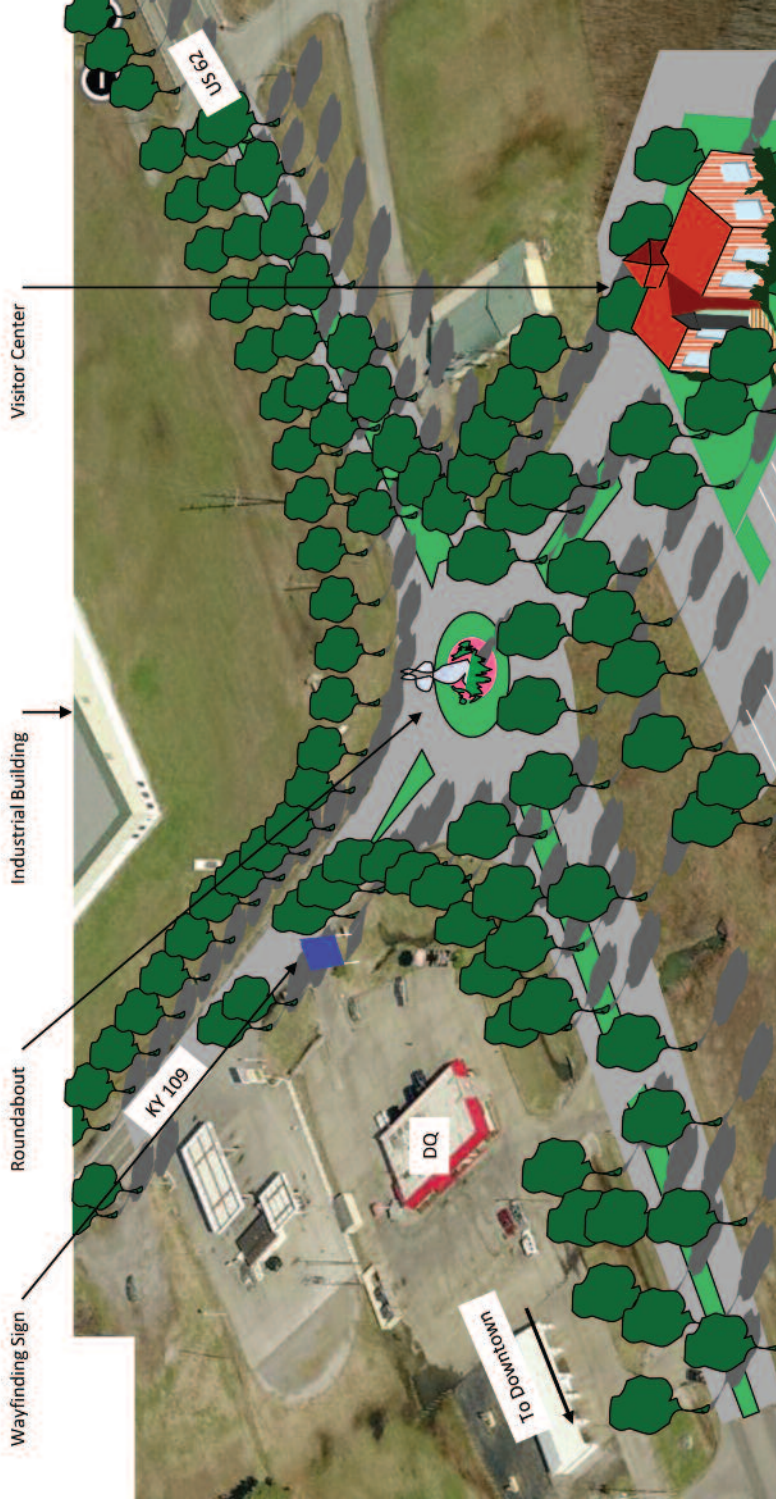
Vital Node: This intersection is vital to the success of the communities overall desires to become a recreation hub. Most visitors will pass through this intersection at least once. Therefore, improvements should be made to enhance the image as well as to provide significant services. See next page for details.

This area can also become connected to both the State Park and State Forest and thus serve as a key trailhead.



SdA + Assoc.
Community Planning
Lexington, Ky.
859-619-5137

Community Strategies: Job Creations

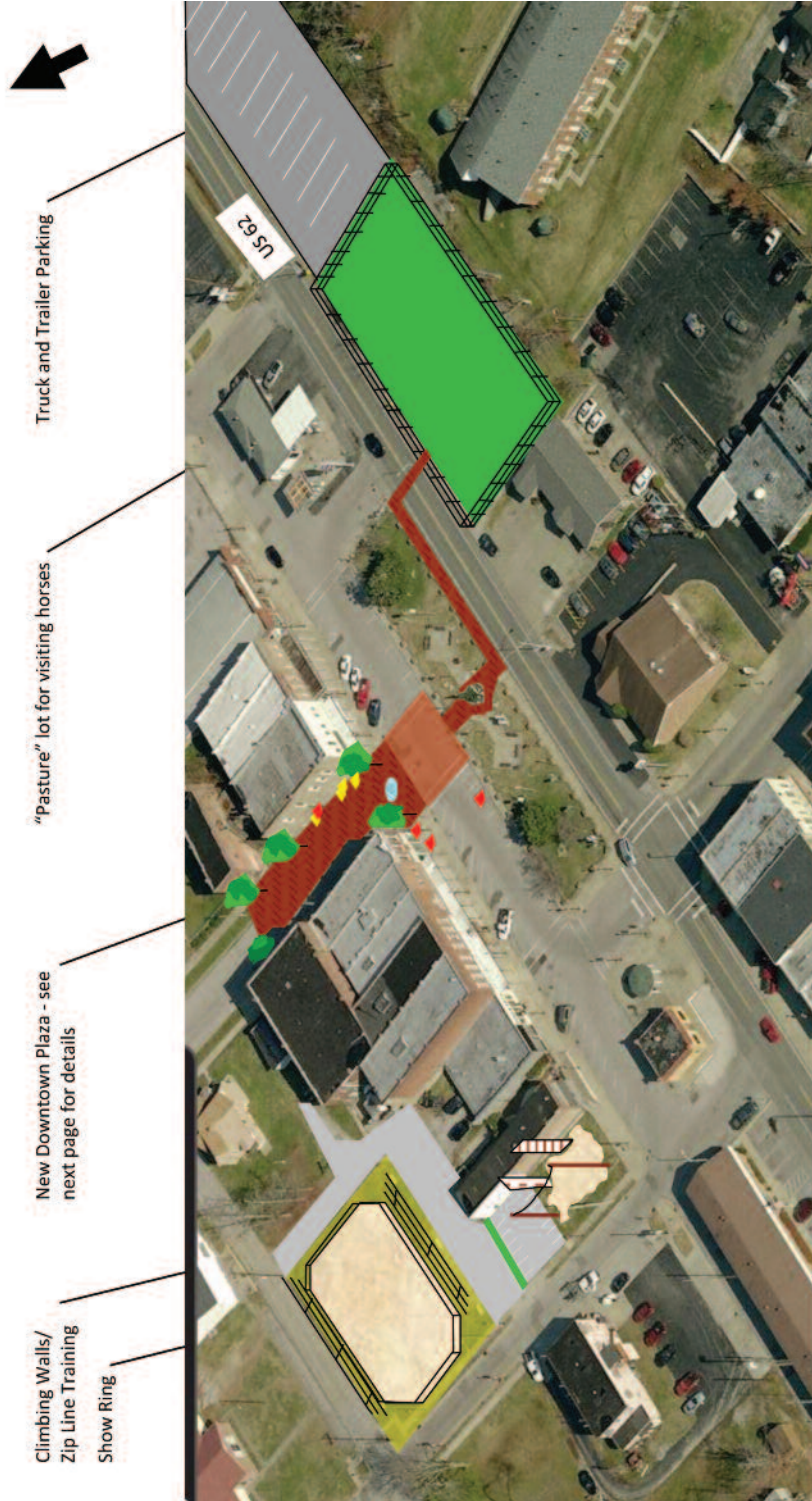


Vital Node: This area could be transformed by redesigning the road intersection into a roundabout containing flowers and art or a sculpture of a prominent local citizen. The landscaping along the roads adds a feel of arriving at a stately destination. The visitor center would contain information and facilities. This area could also become a trailhead with the inclusion of a campground behind the visitor center. Trails could lead easily out to the State Park and Forest.

The industrial building across the street could be used for horse-related events, or more importantly, it could be used as an incubator to develop recreation related industrial businesses: metal working, specialized apparel, horse-related equipment, etc.



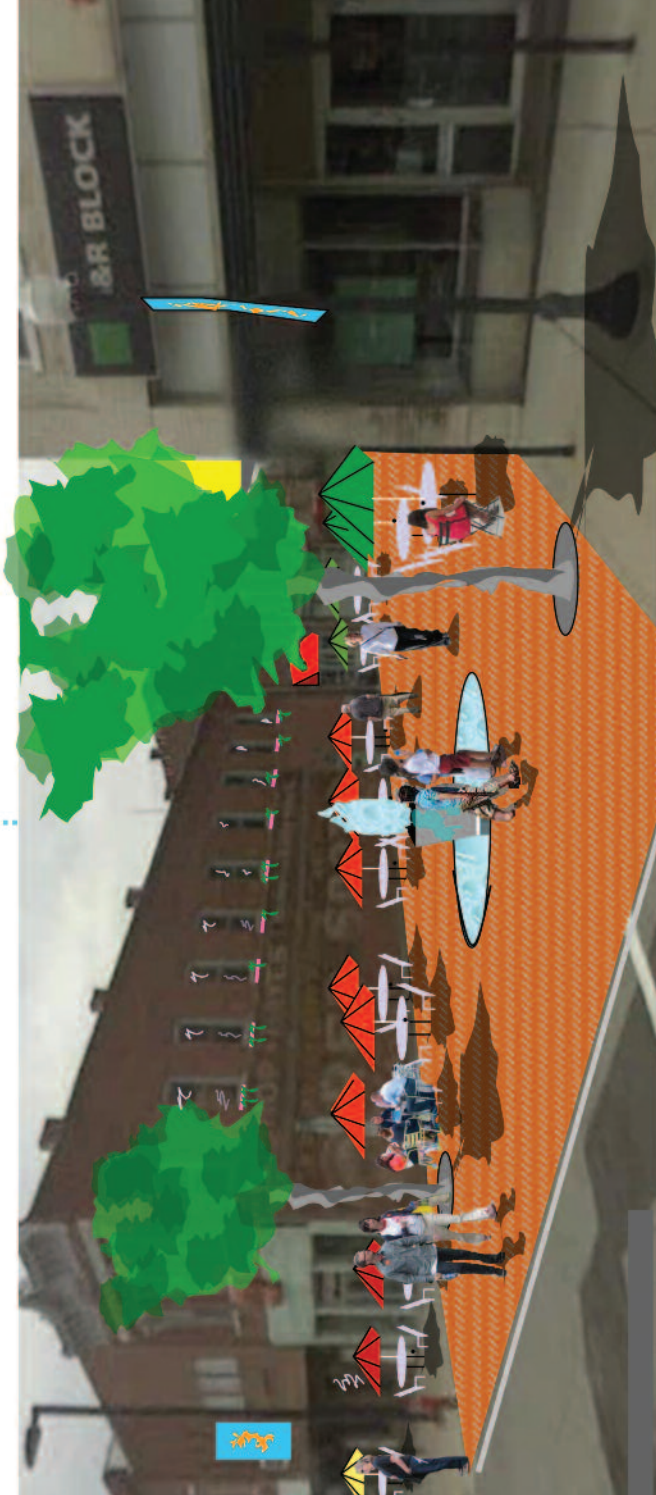
Community Strategies: Job Creations



A Revived Downtown: Downtown Dawson Springs should position itself to be the adventure tourism hub of the region. The citizens of Dawson Springs should work to ensure that all visitors to the region use the downtown as the hub of all activity. Visitors to downtown could get trail and activity information, obtain supplies and training, collect crafts, hear musical performances, watch show horses work, eat a great meal outside or in, park their trailers and even pasture their horses. Upper floors of downtown buildings could be converted into bed and breakfast businesses.



Community Strategies: Job Creations



A New Downtown Plaza: Convert one-half a block of North Main Street into an urban plaza. Traffic will not suffer and the benefits far outweigh the drawbacks. A fountain could be created, trees planted, and buildings opened up to provide outdoor cafe space. In the summer, regular concerts could be held there as a draw for downtown.

SdA + Assoc.
Community Planning
Lexington, Ky.
859-619-5137

Community Strategies: Promotions, Communications and Special Events



Work with Hopkins County Tourist and Convention Commission or the Department of Tourism to establish an overall marketing campaign specific to Dawson Springs. Discuss target audiences, identify the most important and determine the best strategies for reaching those specific audiences.

Work on obtaining marketing materials to include:

- ◆ Trail maps that show Dawson Springs as a Trail Town Center
- ◆ Individual trail maps for all types of trails with information to include length, location and surface description of each trail
- ◆ Listing of area attractions
- ◆ Calendar of activities for locals as well as visitors
- ◆ Contact information for services related to trail usage

Visit a Trail Town USA city in another community. Take a road trip for interested residents, current business owners, and potential entrepreneurs. (Nashville may be a good choice due to its close proximity – www.tntrailsandbyways.com may provide ideas to consider.)

Upon returning from the road trip, conduct a similar tour of Dawson Springs. Identify areas that need to be worked on, prioritize, identify partners that can help, and get to work.

Create an overall design for entrance/welcome signs into the city. If possible tie these conceptually to the signs marking the trail systems. Develop a budget, seek funding, build the signs and get them erected. Trail signs are regulated by KRS statute, so work directly with the Kentucky Department of Parks. The state will provide trail markers for designated trails at no cost. Consider approaching the realtors association as a potential financial partner for the entrance signs.

Identify local persons with talent in marketing and promotions. You may find these individuals working for larger companies or organizations such as the utility company, the school or the hospital. Inquire as to their availability to share that talent with the community on a one-time basis for tax credit or some other form of exchange.

Seek out potential trail users to blog about the trails in the community. If visitors read good reviews about a trail on a blog, they will come!

Contact the Kentucky Tourism Cabinet and become familiar with their requirements for broader publicity of local tourism offerings.

Get the Dawson Springs website updated and keep the information fresh. Connect to the Friends of the Pennyrile page.

Constantly maintain the Facebook page for Dawson Springs.

Link Dawson Springs to other Trail Town cities for cross promotions.

Encourage local businesses to use the mall mentality of being open during the same hours and coordinating advertisements.

Encourage schools and churches to use the town center for events and activities.

Community Strategies: Promotions, Communications and Special Events

Encourage outdoor food, entertainment, music, dance, and art at every opportunity.

Special Events

In keeping with the Trail Town concept, it is important to provide potential visitors with activities that will keep them in and around Dawson Springs. Having an established calendar of events enables potential tourists to plan their visit around what is happening in the area. Even if the calendar only offers one to three months at a time, having consistent schedules available for the public is very important.

We recommend a series of weekend events that local residents will enjoy as much as those that may visit from out of town. Farmers markets every Saturday morning during the summer are made even more special by having live music. Whether it is a church choir, the fifth grade class at the elementary school, a local harmonica player or a full fledged band, music will help draw crowds to any event. Be consistent on when and where the market is held so visitors can easily locate the activities. We suggest keeping the market centrally located in the downtown to get people into local businesses.

Schedule a parade two or three times a year. Encourage classrooms (school or church) to compete for best float or best entry. Seek out people with horses, wagons, tractors, bicycles, and vintage vehicles, and invite them to participate. Be sure to promote this event to tourists, encourage them to enter the parade with their horse, flag, regalia or costume.

Schedule equestrian games or competitions for the community. For example:

- ◆ Pair a senior citizen with a grade school child, use stick horses and run races around the Veterans Park.
- ◆ Offer pony rides in the vacant lot in front of



the community center.

- ◆ Play pin the tail on the horse, fun for adults and children.
- ◆ Set up horse shoes in the memorial park.
- ◆ Use cowboy/girl hats and toss horse shoes into them as an alternative to corn hole.
- ◆ Cut out horse shoe shapes on heavy stock paper and have children decorate them.
- ◆ Have local people bake cakes and pies and have an old fashioned cake walk.

Have judges pick winners and offer prizes for the most colorful, the zaniest, cutest, funniest, and most unique.

Community Strategies: Big Ideas



Equine Industry

The North American Racing Academy located in Lexington at the Bluegrass Community and Technical College, operates a world-class racing school providing students with the education, training and experience needed to become skilled in the art of race riding, proficient in the care and management of racehorses, and knowledgeable about the workings of the racing industry as a whole.

Utilizing some of the existing curriculum from the Academy and relationships in place with Madisonville Community College and Murray State University, we propose that Dawson Springs provide the location for a sister campus in order to educate regional individuals in the care and management of horses, as well as jobs and industries related to the equine trades.

Examples of course options might include:

- ◆ Equine Business Management
- ◆ Equine Facilities Management
- ◆ Equine Reproduction
- ◆ Equine Dentistry
- ◆ Equine Safety
- ◆ Equine Training for Performance Horses
- ◆ Equine Nutrition, Diseases and Health

- ◆ Equine Marketing, Promotions and Publications

Additional career training might include:

- ◆ Ferrier
- ◆ Auctioneer
- ◆ Groom
- ◆ Horse Show Management
- ◆ Riding Instructor
- ◆ Saddle and Tack Maker
- ◆ Professional Rider
- ◆ Farm Real Estate
- ◆ Horse Equipment

This concept may address the entrepreneurial center that was suggested at the public meeting.

Community Strategies: Big Ideas

Mineral Water

A natural resource of mineral spring water abounds in Dawson Springs. One of the first steps property owners should consider is to test the water to see if it meets the FDA requirements for bottling. If it doesn't meet those requirements, it cannot be bottled as mineral water.

FDA bottled water requirements: Water containing not less than 250 parts per million (ppm) total dissolved solids that originates from a geologically and physically protected underground water source. Mineral water is characterized by constant levels and relative proportions of minerals and trace elements at the source. No minerals may be added to mineral water.

Source: U.S. EPA



National Drinking Water Regulations and Standards

Depending upon the results of the testing, we recommend the owners of the springs, existing bottling companies in the surrounding area, and persons interested in economic and business development come together for an educational summit. Invite state resources from the EPA, FDA and Health and Human Services to provide an overview of state requirements and regulations related to mineral water.

Investigate other cities that have mineral water activities. Hot Springs, Arkansas and Steamboat Springs, Colorado are two worthy examples. While some activities may be government-owned and operated, many are privately held business operations.



**A New Direction
for Dawson Springs**

Created by the residents of Dawson Springs, Kentucky
with assistance from the Kentucky League of Cities.

2012