

JENKINS



Jenkins Strategic Plan

2012



Jenkins - A City Built on Coal

The Founding of Jenkins, Kentucky

Jenkins is located at the foot of Pine Mountain in Letcher County, Kentucky, adjacent to the Kentucky – Virginia state line. In 1911, the Consolidated Coal Company (Consol) purchased nearly 100,000 acres of land in Pike, Letcher and Floyd Counties for the purpose of mining coal. Several small towns were built to accommodate the industry and workers that would soon come to the area. These included McRoberts, Jenkins, Burdine and Dunham. Everything needed to build the mines and the towns had to be hauled in by ox and wagon over the mountains. No paved roads or railroad tracks existed.

Jenkins is unique in its development as compared to other small towns because it didn't come into existence by a small settlement over a period of years. Jenkins was planned and built for men who came to mine its coal.

Consol began its work on the construction of Jenkins. No one knows if it was planned this way, but Jenkins is made up of four small towns, incorporated under one small township — Dunham, Burdine, Jenkins, and up until a few years ago, McRoberts. When you speak of Jenkins, you speak of them all. Each section was built separately. Times were good in the early 1920s and 1930s. At one time, Jenkins reached its peak

in population with almost 10,000 people living within its city limits.

The biggest single social change in Jenkins came in 1947, when the company announced that the whole town of Jenkins was on the market. The following information may explain the situation. When one got a job with Consol, the company gave him a house rent-free. They paid no electric bill, water bill, sewage bill, and got fuel for a very small fee. Of course, the wages were small, but there was no sizeable outlay either. Part of the wages was paid in script. Script was a type of money printed by the company and could only be spent in company-owned businesses.

It has been said that the company brought the citizens of Jenkins into the world since they owned the only hospital, and it also escorted them out of this town since it owned the only funeral home.

Much has changed since those early days. Today, Jenkins is a shadow of its former self. Her people, however, still possess the pride and caring spirit that has always been a part of this unique place. Jenkins is alive and well, ready to face the challenges and move forward.

(Excerpts from *The History of Jenkins, Kentucky* published in 1973 by the Jenkins Area Jaycees. Text in the public domain. Written by Wendell D. Boggs).

Creating the Plan

Process

In May 2012, the City of Jenkins approached the Kentucky League of Cities to discuss the creation of a three- to five-year strategic plan. Mayor G.C. Kincer wanted citizen involvement and assembled a Strategic Plan Steering Committee to help guide the process locally.

The mayor and committee members agreed that involving the public was critical to the successful implementation of the plan. All agreed that the plan should honor and build upon previous efforts



and accomplishments. The plan needed to be visionary and challenge the community to think about ALL of the ways that they might build a strong local economy and good quality of life. Many members spoke of the pride of the city and its history, but also recognized the challenges that the city faces. A meeting date of June 28, 2012, was set for a Community Listening and Design Session.

A public meeting was held at Jenkins High School on June 28, 2012. More than 60 citizens participated in the listening and design session. For two-and-a-half hours they worked, discussed and shared ideas about the future of Jenkins. Not a single person left the meeting before its conclusion even though the temperature was around 100 degrees. The citizens were serious and committed.

From the public meeting, the consultants from KLC learned about the things that the community most values. Community Core Values were



Core Values

Every city is unique. The values that are shared by the residents of a city also vary greatly. Throughout the Jenkins process, certain key values rose to the top again and again. These common threads are called the Core Values. They shape and define the community. The Jenkins Strategic Plan is built upon these Community Core Values:

- ◆ Close-knit community of caring people
- ◆ Location
- ◆ History
- ◆ The great outdoors
- ◆ Good leadership

identified and these values form the basic building blocks of the community's strategic plan. Many innovative and, sometimes, easy solutions were suggested. These ideas were incorporated into the plan as much as possible.

The Challenges & Solutions

The Challenges

Like many rural Kentucky communities, the City of Jenkins has many challenges before it including lack of jobs, a poverty mindset, perceived isolation and lack of flat land. The first step in overcoming any challenge is to acknowledge it and then deal with it. The local leaders and the residents have made some fundamental decisions to take control of their own destiny. The next steps are to make the choices that will produce the kind of community that the citizens deserve and to believe that they actually do deserve it.

Where Does Jenkins Begin?

Begin with the recognition that change has already started. The city is aggressively moving forward with several projects to improve the local quality of life. These include plans to build a new swimming pool, create a community center, take advantage of the new entrance into town along Route 805, develop a walking path around the city lake, and the rehabilitation of the old Jenkins School into senior housing.

These improvements send a message to the community and potential businesses: "We care about our own people first." This is, however, only the first layer of building blocks to solving the puzzle. Creating a good local quality of life spills over to the kind of experience that visitors and potential business investors have when they come to Jenkins. Additionally, Jenkins must create business opportunities, improve its workforce, identify potential investors and entrepreneurs, provide tourism infrastructure, and become less dependent on the global economy.

These choices will not be easy, but choosing is half the battle. To keep doing the same things and expecting a different result is a losing strategy. To win, Jenkins must demonstrate that it has the willpower to sustain an economic transformation that will ultimately create a place where people can live, raise a family, have a great time, stay, visit, relax, work, shop, and renew. These are the challenges.

The Solutions

In the 21st century, all economic development begins with "quality of life." They are, indeed, one and the same. The creation of a global economy has exposed critical weaknesses at the local level. For example, if China decides to increase its demand for petroleum, the entire world feels the resulting higher prices. If Europe has a financial meltdown, the entire American economy feels the aftershock.

The new way of survival is actually a throwback to days past – build a LOCAL and INDEPENDENT economy that can sustain the City of Jenkins. It's not as difficult or preposterous as it might sound. By decreasing the city's dependence on others, Jenkins will actually become a more enticing marketplace for the region, the nation and the world.

Building a local economy begins with the creation of basic industries – local food production, jobs that provide local essentials, local energy, local

The Solutions

- ◆ Local Connections – Connect downtown Jenkins, Burdine and Dunham with pedestrian trails to unify the communities.
- ◆ Local Food – Use the production of local food to improve health and to create economic opportunities.
- ◆ Local Tourism – Develop new recreational opportunities to connect the region, to attract visitors and to add new employment and business opportunities.
- ◆ Local Energy – Develop partnerships to sustain Jenkins' position as an energy production center.
- ◆ Local Entrepreneurship – Encourage entrepreneurs, especially youth, to begin local production of essentials not readily available in the community.

The Challenges & Solutions

recreation and a common, unifying vision of the future. The Jenkins strategic plan is built upon these tried-and-true principles. This plan will address each of these areas in detail with practical and implementable action steps for the community to consider. Doing all of these things is not required for Jenkins to be successful. However, empowering people to think and act in different and innovative

ways is a fundamental path to prosperity in the long-term. Jenkins' plan is bold and innovative. At the same time, it is practical and achievable if the community embraces and implements it step-by-step. As the community accomplishes each task, it is important to pause, celebrate, give thanks, and then move on to the next thing!



What We Heard & Saw



Listening and Design

On June 28, 2012, the citizens of Jenkins gathered in the cafeteria of Jenkins High School for a listening session and design charette. More than 60 people worked for two-and-a-half hours describing the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the city. They also took up markers, pictures, Post-it Notes and maps as they designed a visual image of a future Jenkins – one that expressed the hopes, dreams and values of the community. The Jenkins Strategic Plan is built upon the foundation that was laid that evening, and this is a summary of what we learned:

What We Heard & Saw

Residents are attuned to the opportunities and challenges presented to their community. Some of the common themes that have emerged include:

- ◆ Create a “local” economy – jobs, food, tourism, activities, and amenities
- ◆ Promote an active lifestyle – recreation facilities, adventure tourism, and trails
- ◆ Improve healthcare and wellness
- ◆ Develop the housing stock – market-rate, seniors
- ◆ Upgrade the infrastructure including sidewalks, water, sewer and utilities



Jenkins - The Facts

Jenkins, Kentucky lies in the heart of Appalachia. Founded in 1912, the city prides itself as "A City Built on Coal." It is an unusual town in that it was completely planned by the Consolidated Coal Company before a single resident moved to the town. One might say it was an early example of present-day "new urbanism!"

Over the past 100 years, much has changed in the coal industry and the city built to serve it. One thing has remained constant, however, and that is the love of the people of Jenkins for their community and for each other.

The Coal Facts

Change is never easy for people or for a town. The people of Jenkins are no different than most other Americans. They want good jobs, a thriving economy, affordable housing, good places to shop, a great education for their children and things to do during their spare time. Change has just been a bit more unkind to Jenkins in some ways. Gone are the days when coal paid for everything. The big companies have packed up and moved on or have automated much of the mining process so that the large number of human laborers are no longer needed. In fact, the coal mining industry in Kentucky has had many economic ups and downs since the late 1970s. Unfortunately, many of the good paying jobs are gone, and they are not coming back.

The Income Facts

The ups and downs of the coal industry are further exacerbated by the nature of the global economy in general. With the loss of capital investment and coal-related jobs, the City of Jenkins has seen a

steep decline economically in a more global sense. Local businesses have suffered financial loss or closed completely. The young people have moved on to greener pastures in search of good jobs. The support industries and businesses have downsized or boarded up altogether. The relatively isolated location of Jenkins has left it struggling to deal in a much larger competitive market – the global economy.

Median household income in Jenkins is far below the national and Kentucky averages. Twenty-four percent of Jenkins' families live below the poverty line. The economy, in general, is bleak in this once-thriving community.

* The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) helps people with little or no money buy food for healthy meals at participating stores. SNAP benefits increase a household's food buying power when added to the household's money.

The Blame Game

It is the nature of people to generally blame some one or some thing for their problems. Many people outside of eastern Kentucky try to blame coal or the people or the politicians for the economic conditions that face the area. Blame-makers look for blame-takers. Blaming some one or some thing is somehow supposed to make it all better. It never does. In the end, the only thing that matters is that someone steps up to change the circumstances.

Changing the Game

The leadership and residents of Jenkins decided some time ago to take ownership of their own problems and destiny. Working with limited

	Jenkins	Kentucky
Median Household Income	\$22,162	\$41,576
Mean Household Income	\$33,264	\$56,009
Population on Food Stamps or SNAP	37.1%	14%

*According to 2010 Census

Jenkins – The Facts

economic resources, a lot of progress has been made in terms of improving the quality of life in Jenkins. Rich in tradition and steeped in pride, this town began to clean up and fix up at the dawn of the 21st century.

Today, Jenkins is ready to take a new leap forward under the leadership of Mayor G.C. Kincer. In addition to the mayor and city council, others within the community who work in positions of leadership are joining forces to tackle the issues and create new

opportunities for the city’s residents. Most importantly, ordinary citizens with an extraordinary belief that they can make a positive change have stepped up to solve some of the community’s most vexing problems.

Now, the battle has been joined to determine if this proud town in these beautiful mountains can rise from the economic depths of despair to create opportunities anew. The game has changed and this is how they will win it.

	Jenkins	United States
Families Living Below Poverty Level	24.6%	9.2%
Individuals Living Below Poverty Level	29.9%	12.4%

*According to survey by American Towns

Jenkins – A City Built on Ingenuity

Jenkins is a city built on coal! There is nothing to dispute about that claim...and nothing will change it. Simply put, Jenkins would not exist as it does today if it were not for the coal industry. However, for Jenkins to succeed in the future, it must become **Jenkins, a city built on ingenuity!**

Why ingenuity? Because Jenkins of the past will not save Jenkins of the future. Jenkins can honor its coal heritage, continue to be tied to the coal industry AND diversify its economy. Either/or arguments do not apply here. This is definitely an AND strategy. Coal AND other things.

For Jenkins to succeed, it must focus on its local resources. By leveraging these assets, the city can build a quality of life that benefits its own citizens while simultaneously creating the kind of place that people in the region will want to visit and, hopefully, live. This approach is like building a house. Once the foundation is in place, the community can begin framing the rest of the structure.

Five Building Blocks

These are the building blocks of Jenkins’ local economy:

- ◆ Local Connections
- ◆ Local Food
- ◆ Local Recreation and Tourism
- ◆ Local Energy
- ◆ Local Entrepreneurship



Building Block 1: Local Connections

The City of Jenkins actually consists of three parts: the central business district, the community of Burdine and the community of Dunham. These three distinct areas are divided by topography and distance. These three areas need to be connected visually so that anyone visiting the city knows where the city begins and ends. Currently, driving an automobile is the only real way to connect the parts.

The city should set on a course to create other kinds of connections including:

- ◆ Signage – Entrance signage at the gateways to Jenkins needs to be improved. Distinctive and compatible signage particularly along Highway 805 should be used to brand the city.
- ◆ Trails and Paths – Creating biking, walking and hiking trails along the creek from the central business district to the community of Burdine provides a unique opportunity to connect the community and encourage people to get out and explore.
- ◆ Banners and Road Markers – Utilizing uniform banners in the three communities of Jenkins will create a visual connection for people driving through the city. Presently, it is difficult for visitors to know that the communities are connected and that the city is, in fact, a very long town. Road markers delineating the communities would also provide visual appeal. For example, a marker that says “Entering the Burdine Community of Jenkins” would give a sense of belonging to the entire city.
- ◆ Road Improvements – With the massive construction of roads around and into Jenkins, the city has a unique opportunity to work with the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet to create entryways that encourage people to funnel into the central business district. While the opportunity for economic expansion along the new roadways presents significant business investment opportunities, the central business district must remain the focal point of concentrated economic activity. This will only

happen if traffic feeder roads are designed to encourage people to go downtown.

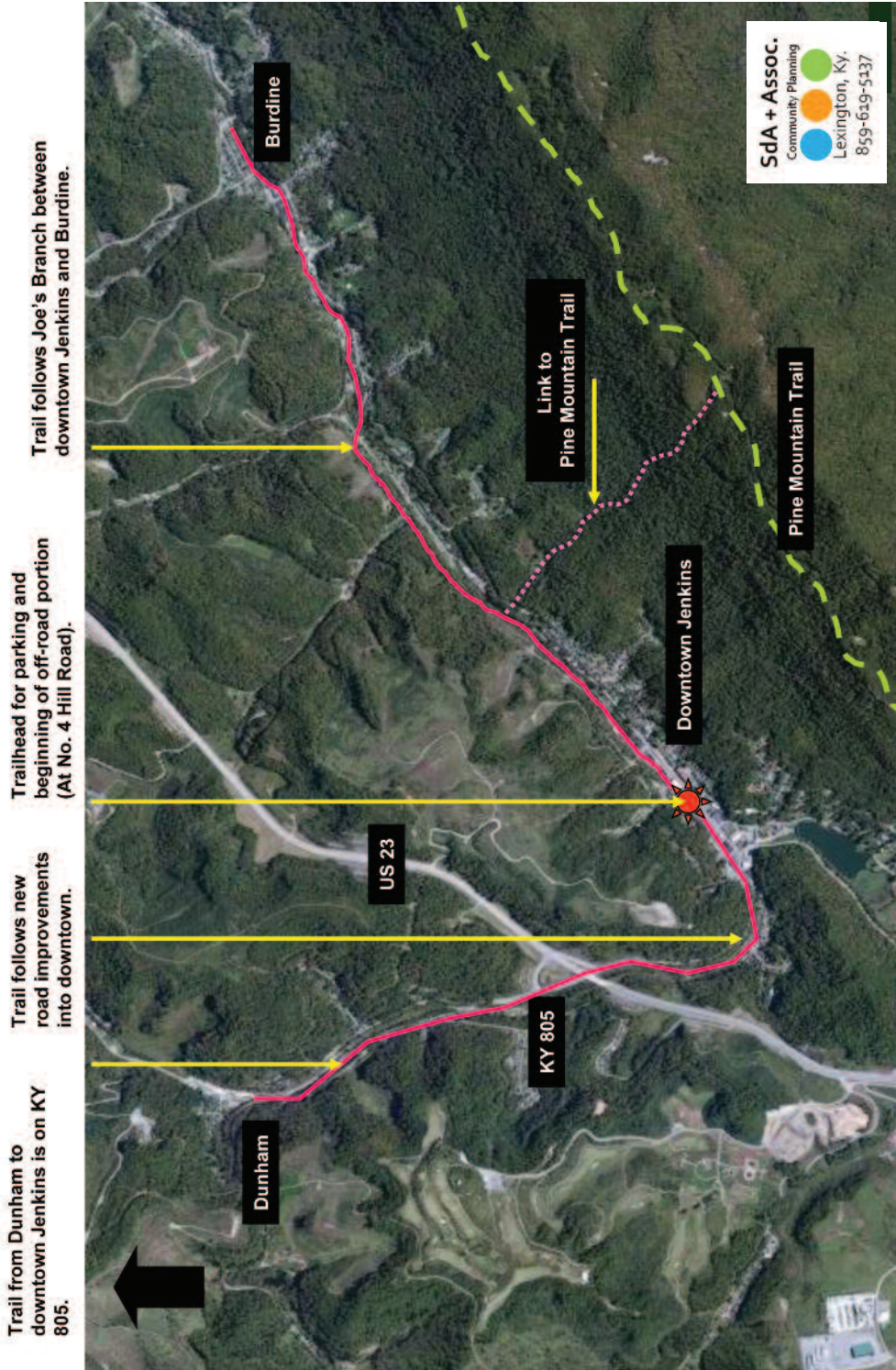
- ◆ Downtown as The Core – Every aspect of economic activity in Jenkins should emanate from the downtown including recreation, shopping, lodging, trail heads, outfitters and government. Abandoning the downtown is not an option. The downtown must remain viable and the central point of people-connections and activities.
- ◆ Establish a “Public Square” at the entrance to downtown. (See drawings for a visual representation of what this could look like.)

Next Steps

- ◆ Convene a group of interested citizens and stakeholders to develop consensus on specific areas of improvement. Build community support through community conversations, flyers, fact sheets, concept drawings and informal conversations.
- ◆ Immediately convene a meeting with KYTC to review and negotiate necessary changes to the road development plan that can help to create connections throughout the city from the main highways.
- ◆ Identify the low-hanging fruit that can achieve immediate and visible results. Then move on to the more difficult tasks.
- ◆ Develop and implement a trail system that connects as many parts of the city to the central business district as possible.
- ◆ Identify locations for signage, banners and road markers to create visual “connections” along the city’s main thoroughfares.
- ◆ Set up project teams focused on each of these areas and develop three-year implementation plans that include potential funding streams, budgets and milestones to measure progress. Then, get to work!

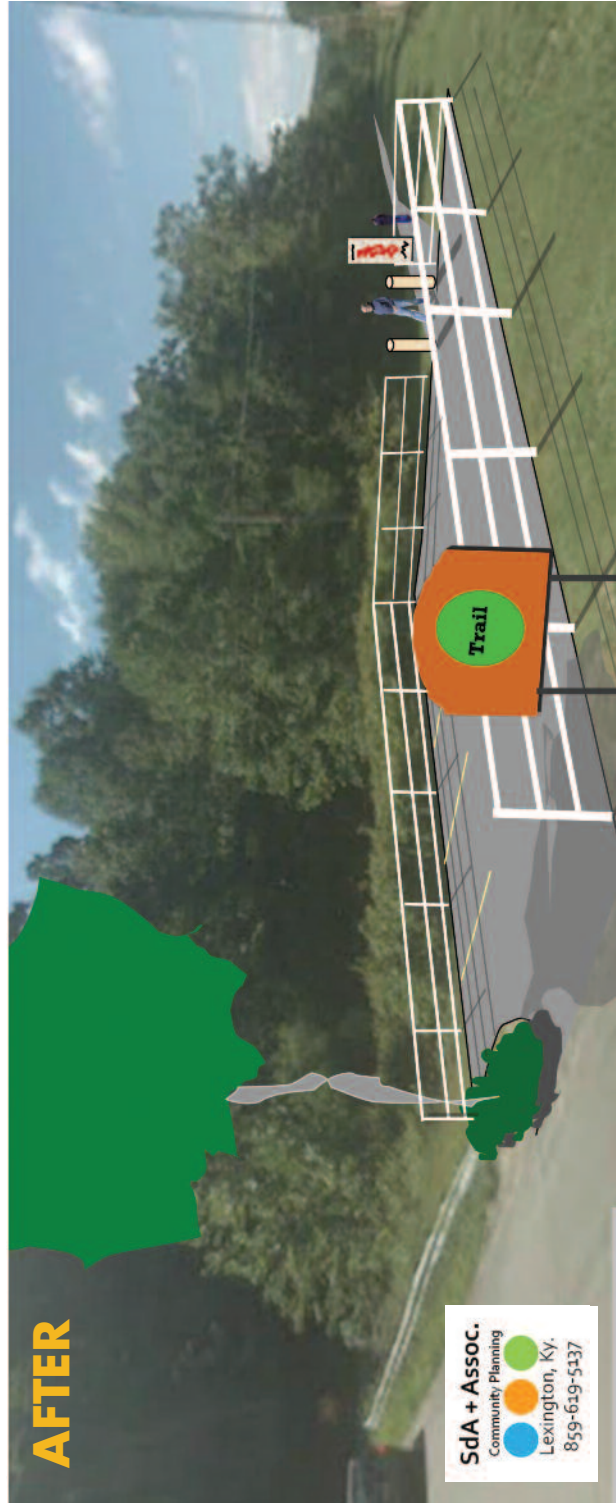
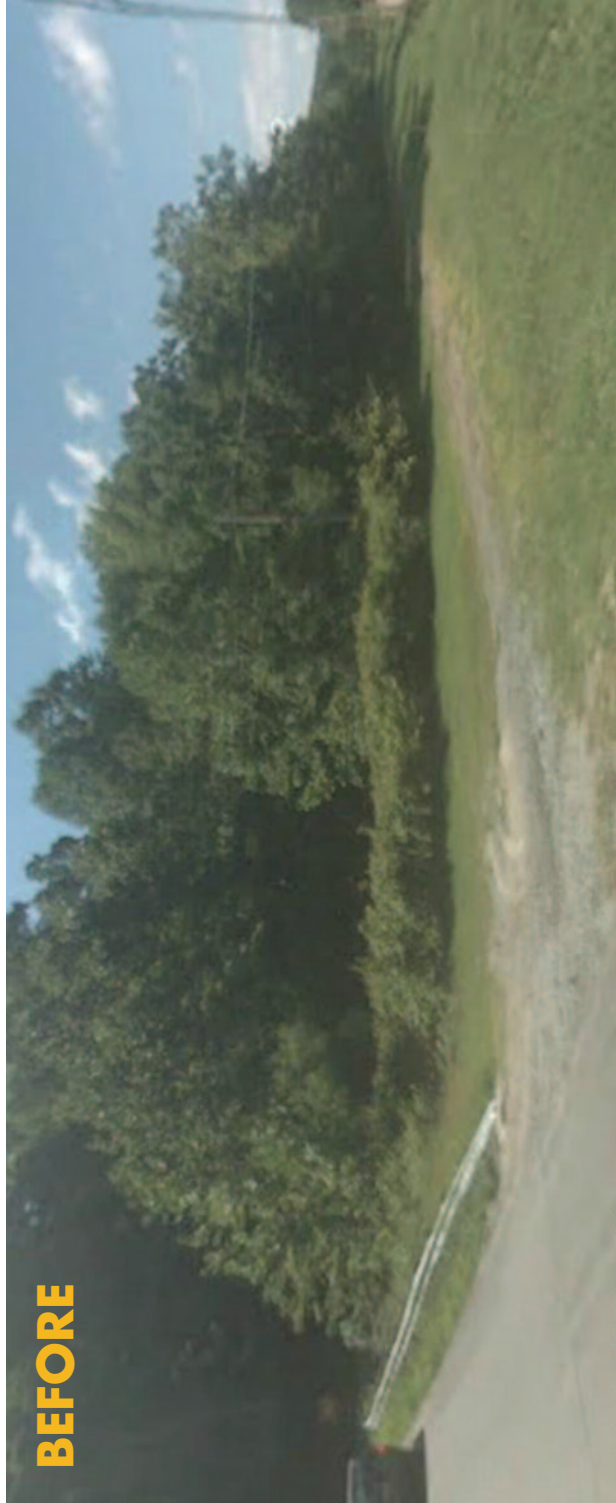


Building Block 1: Local Connections





Building Block 1: Local Connections



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Building Block 1: Local Connections





Building Block 1: Local Connections

Entry Plaza with Historical Marker



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859-619-5137



Building Block 2: Local Food



During the listening and design sessions, several people listed opportunities related to food and food production including farmers markets. One of the challenges that arose was the lack of flat land. Fortunately, the agriculture industry has come a long way during the last three decades. Flat land is no longer a requirement for sustainable food production

With the rise in health-related illnesses linked to pesticides and unhealthy eating habits, locally-produced food free from the potential side effects of pesticides and fungicides is in high demand everywhere. Jenkins should become a statewide leader in the production of local food. The potential benefits are enormous and the economic impact could be a game-changer for the community.

Hydroponics – a method of growing plants using mineral nutrient solutions in water without topsoil – has made tremendous strides over the past decade. From roof gardens in major metropolitan areas to desert greenhouses, hydroponics is expanding the opportunities for communities anywhere and of any size to grow local food.

In addition to crop production, the same principles apply to catfish and shrimp production. These industries present tremendous growth potential for business and academic research in Jenkins.

Locally produced crops are healthier and more desirable than at any time in recent history. With the introduction of polyethylene plastic, inexpensive

greenhouse production of crops became possible in 1948. The first use of polyethylene as a greenhouse cover was by Professor Emery Myers Emmert at the University of Kentucky.

In Jenkins, the possibility exists to convert potentially contaminated brownfield sites into productive food production facilities. Although EPA regulations may pose some challenges, the production process itself does not require the use of the soil in order for the produce operation to be safe or successful. Some food for thought!

Next Steps

What? Research and identify the opportunities available in Jenkins. Identify potential sites for these types of businesses. Conduct a market study of potential demand for locally grown foods in the region. Many resources are available online related to the hydroponics industry. These resources contain how-to instructions, assessment tools and potential funding resources. Explore other successful farming operations and learn what works and what doesn't.

Who? Explore a partnership with the University of Kentucky College of Agriculture, the Kentucky Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Agriculture to begin exploring funding and business opportunities. Identify local residents that have an interest in exploring this opportunity and empower them to develop research and create a plan for Jenkins.

How? Secure angel investors and/or grants to back the establishment of local production facilities. Discuss funding sources with the USDA Rural Development division, the Appalachian Regional Commission and the Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development. Other potential resources could be available from the Small Business Administration (SBA). Talk with other communities that have undertaken this kind of operation.

When? Understand the development timelines that other communities and organizations have used.



Building Block 3: Local Recreation and Tourism



Jenkins is a gold mine when it comes to recreation and tourism opportunities. People love to get outdoors and have fun! In the short term, Jenkins has several facilities in place and is already forging ahead with several projects. They include:

- ◆ A new walking path around the city lake (Elkhorn Lake)
- ◆ A new swimming pool at the recreation complex
- ◆ A new community center adjacent to the swimming pool site
- ◆ A new wellness center
- ◆ Renovation of the former Jenkins High School into senior adult housing
- ◆ Little Shepherd Amphitheatre featuring The Little Shepherd of Kingdom Come Outdoor Drama
- ◆ Festivals
 - Jenkins Days Festival
 - Jenkins Homecoming Festival
- ◆ Civil War Memorial Park
- ◆ Thunder on the Mountain Civil War Reenactment
- ◆ Coal-Railroad Museum
- ◆ Raven Rock Golf Course

New Ideas

- ◆ Establish a Jenkins/Letcher County visitors center on Highway 23 at the Kentucky-Virginia state line.
- ◆ Create a zip line from Raven Rock to the downtown incorporating Elkhorn Lake in the plan – a potentially great tourist draw and fun for locals, too. This would offer a unique experience not found in other zip lines in the region.



- ◆ The entire area encompassed by the eastern mountain should become a recreation area with hiking and rock climbing.
- ◆ Raven Rock – The city should explore acquiring the area known as Raven Rock to create a nature preserve that includes a lodge, restaurant, and trail system.
- ◆ Create a local/regional trail system with several potential trail paths.
 - First and foremost, develop an intra-community trail system to connect Dunham, the central business district and Burdine using the existing highways and the creek bed.
 - Open the old tunnel between Jenkins and Pound, Virginia.
 - Connect to Wise, Virginia and on to the Appalachian Trail (bold, ambitious and many challenges, but well worth the time and investment to explore).



Building Block 3: Local Recreation and Tourism

- Connect with Whitesburg and, possibly, Pikeville utilizing old railroad beds.
- ♦ Create a Living Mine Museum – Although Jenkins would not be the first Kentucky community to create a museum inside an actual mine, a living coal mine museum in Jenkins has the potential to draw a large regional audience. An attraction of this type would honor the mining heritage of Jenkins and Letcher County and create a unique experience for locals, school children and visitors. A living mine would also create the potential for offshoot businesses including bed-and-breakfast accommodations, souvenir shops and anchor an overall tourism experience for visitors.
- ♦ Redevelop the old country club site – Some ideas mentioned by the community include the development of a rodeo exhibition, horse riding as well as conversion of the country club into a small hotel and restaurant facility.
- ♦ Expand the performance and business capacity of the Little Shepherd Amphitheatre by completing water and sewer infrastructure, parking, public facilities as well as opening a trail through the old railroad tunnel owned by TECO. The ripple effect of installing basic infrastructure would be significant. It would allow the amphitheater to expand its performance offerings, create a safer roadway and better parking, enlarge the Civil War re-enactment and accommodate larger audiences for these performances.
- ♦ Tourism infrastructure is critical to the success of this plan. At present, there are no hotels for overnight accommodation in Jenkins. The city lacks places to buy the things that tourists need. Specific examples of the kinds of businesses that attract tourists are contained in the listening session report. Attracting and supporting these businesses by the local community is critical to the success of building a sustainable and credible tourism industry.

This portion of the plan is specifically tied to the development of local entrepreneurship.

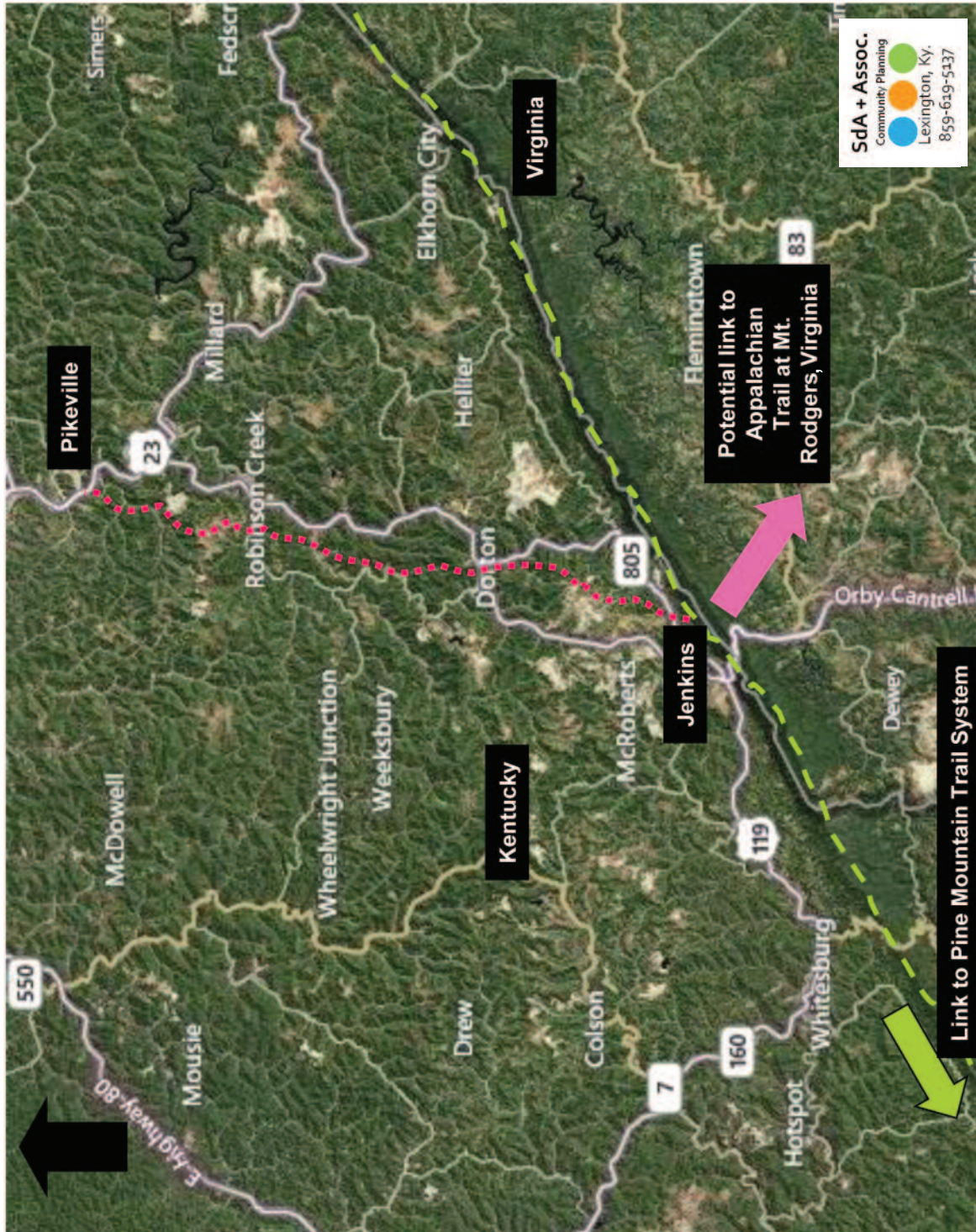
- ♦ Wi-Fi Infrastructure – The city should seek funding through the USDA's Rural Utility Services to create a Wi-Fi network through grants and/or low-cost loans.
- ♦ Local Restaurant and Transient Room Tax – Tourism usually does not generate a lot of revenue for local government. However, the city does have the option of levying specific taxes related to tourism including a local restaurant and transient room tax subject to specific provisions of the Kentucky Revised Statutes. These options would enable the city to pay for tourism infrastructure by levying those who use it.

Next Steps

- ♦ Develop a comprehensive Recreation and Tourism Master Plan in order to categorize and prioritize the multiple projects that fall under this category.
- ♦ Divide and conquer. Many aspects of this section of the plan can be implemented. The key is identifying volunteers with a specific interest in each aspect of the plan, create a project team for each one and implement small, segmented mini-development plans – each with its own objectives, timelines, budgets and funding plans.
- ♦ Create marketing tools to promote the recreational opportunities as they are available and completed.
- ♦ Establish working partnerships with your Virginia counterparts. Develop a list of projects of mutual benefit. Work together to promote your common interests. Approach funders with a unified vision for regional development. An undertaking of this nature will require political support from the Kentucky and Virginia legislatures and Congress. Make a plan and speak with One Voice. The center of this development is Jenkins!



Building Block 3: Local Recreation and Tourism





Building Block 4: Local Energy



Jenkins is a city built on coal. Jenkins is blessed with an abundance of natural resources. The creation of energy is what Jenkins is about. Using energy as its brand, the City of Jenkins should develop partnerships that perpetuate its position as an energy production center. It should continue on this path by exploiting not only energy resources from the ground including coal and natural gas, but from wind and the sun as well. Again, this is not an either/or strategy. It is an AND strategy.

The area around Jenkins appears to have similar wind power potential as southwestern Pennsylvania, a coal mining region that is rapidly developing wind power assets. Further, reclaimed coal mine sites offer potential for developing solar array fields. Oil and coal companies are rapidly becoming the leaders in the research and development of these alternative energy sources. Why should Jenkins let

any opportunity to create jobs pass by? When coal production picks up – and it will – Jenkins will have just that many more employment options for its citizens. In the meantime, the city should explore and develop all of its energy options.

This plan does not advocate the creation of massive wind farms. Jenkins could begin small with only two or three wind turbines. An excellent location exists just east of the city on the backside of the mountain near the state border. What if Jenkins could create enough wind energy to eliminate the city's electric bill? These energy technologies create high-paying jobs and could significantly reduce Jenkins' dependence on outside energy resources. The accompanying opportunities to attract engineers, maintenance technicians and create new businesses could also expand to include rehabbing the city's buildings to create energy efficiency.



Building Block 4: Local Energy



Not only would this be appealing to business development, but it could also drive and expand energy tourism. This would be unique in Appalachia and could create a positive draw for researchers, university students, and just curious folks. Linking this development to quality of life improvements tied to recreation and history visitors provides a significant draw for the region.

In addition, the city should explore acquiring its own natural gas supply so that it has some control of the overall energy distribution system and can somewhat stabilize energy costs for the residents of the city.

Next Steps

- ◆ Jenkins should develop a comprehensive energy strategic plan to stabilize fluctuating prices.
- ◆ Continue to explore Jenkins' unique relationship with coal and how to utilize this natural resource more effectively to the benefit of the residents of Jenkins.
- ◆ Acquire access to natural gas supplies to provide a cheaper energy alternative for residents.
- ◆ Conduct a feasibility study related to the construction of wind turbines for the creation of electricity for the City of Jenkins. Explore potential "pilot project" funding. Create a development plan for implantation, if feasible.
- ◆ Explore partnering with leaders in the solar industry about the potential for installing solar arrays around the city.
- ◆ Plan, prioritize, and implement.





Building Block 5: Local Entrepreneurship

In 2012, the global economy is in the tank. Economic uncertainty is pervasive throughout Kentucky and the nation. Yet, opportunity is everywhere if all of the ingredients for success are present. Convincing businesses, venture capitalists and investors to come to Jenkins may seem like a daunting task. It certainly has been.

Jenkins, however, is moving in a new and different direction. From need comes determination. Jenkins certainly has both. In order to attract outside investment and reassure local entrepreneurs, Jenkins must prove that it is serious about improving itself by investing in itself. The city has taken bold steps to prove that it is willing to invest its own money, time and energy in its own future. By creating a quality of life for its own residents, the city is sending a strong message that business is welcome and needed to the entrepreneurs of the region.

Youth Entrepreneurship and Work-Study Program

The community should also recognize a resource of innovation that already exists in the community – its young people! The community should establish a youth entrepreneurship mentoring program to teach young people how to start, manage, and grow a business. Start an endowment fund or scholarship/sponsorship fund to start a work-study internship for high school and college students. Over time, the entrepreneurial talent pool will broaden, and the community will begin to reap the



rewards. Creating your own opportunities also gives young people a reason and opportunity to stay/return to Jenkins.

The Big Box Store Chase

Jenkins may have difficulty in attracting the national chain stores that its residents say they want. This harsh reality should not deter the city from trying to attract them. However, the local economy would be better served by attracting and retaining locally owned businesses. They are unique. They are located within the community. The owners are vested in the local community. And, most importantly, local business dollars remain in the local community. People may want their big chain stores to be located out on the main highway, but the reality is that the local economy is not large enough to sustain those kinds of businesses today. Perhaps in the future, but not today.

Here are some of the “business gaps and opportunities” identified by the citizens:

- ◆ Large grocery store
- ◆ Super center
- ◆ Auto repair
- ◆ Lowe’s
- ◆ Restaurants
- ◆ Hotels
- ◆ Bed-and-breakfast
- ◆ Spa retreat



Building Block 5: Local Entrepreneurship

- ◆ Distribution Centers (Walmart, Amazon)
- ◆ Green products manufacturing
- ◆ Technical school
- ◆ Antique district
- ◆ Daycare
- ◆ Convert mine shop to boutiques (Blowing Rock)
- ◆ Bakery
- ◆ Prison
- ◆ Wellness center
- ◆ Housing
- ◆ Community center
- ◆ Meals on Wheels
- ◆ Daycare
- ◆ Ambulance service

Which of these businesses would be considered “local?” Those are the ones to pursue in the short term.

Next Steps

- ◆ Housing development should be at the top of the list. Funding resources for affordable housing development are readily available.
 - The city needs a housing master plan.
 - Door-to-door surveys to establish need are required. Available land is also required.
 - Inventory suitable building sites.
 - Get folks qualified and move forward.
 - Create a “Paint the Town” campaign to fix up, paint and improve the appearance of existing housing.
- ◆ Make three lists. Create strategies for each. Start having recruitment conversations.
 - Businesses that are needed today.
 - Businesses that are needed today, but may take one to three years to get.
 - Businesses that are needed today, but won’t come until the city develops the quality of life that attracts their management, workers and shoppers.
- ◆ Acquire fiber optic infrastructure to improve the broadband capacity of the city. Current bandwidth is not adequate to support 21st century industry/businesses. This is also an opportunity for the city to develop its own cable infrastructure.
- ◆ Provide free Wi-Fi hotspots within the city and parks. Explore
 - USDA’s Rural Utility Service grants/loans for this specific need.
- ◆ Conduct a workforce skills assessment. What skills do your present employers require? Do your present businesses plan to stay? Expand? Leave? Why? Can anything be done to retain them?
- ◆ Work with your school district to identify students who would remain in the area if jobs were available? What kinds of jobs do they want? Does the school district offer the career skills necessary to meet those needs?
- ◆ Explore utilizing old mine sites for long-term document storage. Funding may be available through the Department for Homeland Security.
- ◆ Identify and work with potential employers or new businesses to determine the gaps in the workforce skills. Create a plan and curriculum to address the gaps.
- ◆ Explore setting up business incentives with the Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development. KNOW the businesses/industries you are seeking before you approach the cabinet.
- ◆ Partner with the local community college, Pikeville University or other regional universities to develop a work-study program. The University of Virginia has an excellent program that provides cash incentives to the students and businesses that participate in their program. Talk with UVA about their program. Explore the possibility of establishing a similar model that will work with and for the City of Jenkins and Jenkins Independent School District.

Summary and Conclusion



Once or twice in a generation, a community receives a rare opportunity and gift. Pieces fall into place and leadership arises that make rapid progress possible. This does not imply that there has been no progress in the past. Far from it. If not for the firm foundation put in place during the preceding years, today's opportunity would not exist. However, today is the day that really matters. What Jenkins does within the next three to five years will determine its future for the next generation some 30 years hence.

Jenkins is a city on the move. The energy of the community – from natural resources to the people – is incredible. The opportunities are mind-boggling. There is much work to be done.

Where to start? Follow these simple steps and the city will be on its way to the future that its citizens deserve.

- ◆ Identify and recruit a core group of three to five people to focus on one area of the plan. That means the city needs five working groups – one for each section of the plan. Connections. Food. Tourism and Recreation. Energy. Entrepreneurship.
- ◆ Utilize the steering committee to manage and hold the working groups accountable.
- ◆ Each team should make a list of ideas and projects.

- ◆ Prioritize the list from simple to difficult. Go after the easy ones first
- ◆ Develop a budget for each project.
- ◆ Identify potential funding resources – private sector, local fundraising, an individual with enough money and passion to donate, government grants, foundation/corporate grants, tax options, or angel investors.
- ◆ Create a timeline for each step of each project.
- ◆ **DO SOMETHING! ANYTHING!** Just move forward on something.
- ◆ Tell the community. Tell everybody what you're doing. Invite participation.
- ◆ Take before and after photos.
- ◆ Celebrate success!
- ◆ Start again. You may need to identify different people for the next project. People get tired, burnt out or lose passion. It's okay. Look for new people. The number-one reason that people do not get involved in the community or work on public projects is that they are not **ASKED**. Just ask them to help.
- ◆ Don't forget your young people. They are the most creative, energetic and dynamic group in the city. They want to experience new things. Why not make it an experience that they can use for the rest of their lives? Helping other people and helping the community is richly rewarding in its own right. Volunteering builds leadership and character. It also lets your young people know that you value them and that the community cares about them.

Plans can be overwhelming. They don't have to be. Just find your place or your interest and get started!

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Jenkins Strategic Plan

Created by the residents of Jenkins, Kentucky
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