Cool & Connected: Leveraging Broadband Internet

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Tucker County, West Virginia
June 12, 2019
Who is Smart Growth America?

*Smart Growth America* envisions a country where no matter where you live, or who you are, you can enjoy living in a place that is healthy, prosperous, and resilient.

We empower communities through technical assistance, advocacy, and thought leadership to realize our vision of livable places, healthy people, and shared prosperity.
What is smart growth about?

Shaping the quality of the place and the lives of the people who live there.

...and it’s not new!
The ways we plan our cities

Patterns of development

Image source: https://travelbob.files.wordpress.com/2010/07/pompeii-20.jpg
Traditional town plan

- Mixed-use
- Compact
- Buildings of several stories
- Blocks with multiple building types
- Street grid

Image source: Fodors.com
Map of Davis (1899)

Source: Library of Congress
Downtown Parsons (1911)
Hendricks High School and surrounding neighborhood (early 1900s)
Then came zoning . . .

“Euclidean” zoning

- Fragmented land use
- Drive-only
. . . and the automobile . . .

(and the interstate highway program, and new federal programs for homebuilding, and new rules for capital depreciation . . . )
Prime retail location (late 20th century)

“Walmart Supercenter, an archetypal big box store, in Madison Heights, Virginia.” (from Wikipedia entry for “Big-box store”)
Poor, rural areas will be most affected by Walmart closing 154 stores

Related story: What happens to a tiny town when Walmart disappears?
Prime Residential location
(late 20\textsuperscript{th} century)
Suddenly, things are different

THE ECONOMIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC FUNDAMENTALS HAVE SHIFTED
Pulp and Paper Mill in Parsons (1910-1930)

Image source: West Virginia and Regional History Collection, West Virginia University Libraries

Coal Plant in Davis (1925)

Image source: www.tuckerculture.com/historical-tucker-county-photos/
Abandoned Paper Mill in Davis (1939)

Source: Library of Congress
Abandoned Coal Operation, Mingo County (1932)

Abandoned Coal Town, Ethel (1961)

Image source: West Virginia and Regional History Collection, West Virginia University Libraries
Economic growth

20th century vs. 21st century

“From tools and spools to eds and meds”*

Chasing smokestacks vs. Chasing talent

Manufacturing economy vs. Knowledge economy
The 21st Century Economy

Manufacturing is changing

- Smaller part of our economy
- Its nature has changed
The 21st Century Economy

- Creativity, knowledge, innovation
- Importance of networking, interaction
- Demand for skilled workers

“Talent is replacing the tax incentive as the No. 1 economic-development tool in America.”

Mark Wilson, president and CEO
Florida Chamber of Commerce
Quoted in Palm Beach Post, June 9, 2016
Demographic Change
Boomers are a different kind of Senior Citizen
“Adulthood II”

Boomers not ready for the rocking chair

- Today’s retiree can live past 90

- “These additional 31 years of expected life have not been just tacked on at the end . . . Today’s 65-year-olds are starting new careers or continuing old ones, traveling around the world, and eloping with new loves, in a stage of life we are calling ‘Adulthood II.’”

- cultural anthropologist Mary Catherine Bateson, quoted in ULI report
Boomers and housing

Boomers are downsizing
Millennials are different:

Your children and grandchildren

Millennials

They follow lifestyle, not jobs.

Millennials choose where to live before finding a job.

Of all college-educated 25- to 34-year-olds, 64% looked for a job after they chose the city where they wanted to live.

Smart Growth America (U.S. Census)
Preferences: Transportation
Preferences: Housing

47% 12% 40%
These economic and demographic changes have big implications
Core Values
Why American Companies are Moving Downtown

Download the report at www.smartgrowthamerica.org/core-values
Traditional Main Streets are back

Fairhope, Alabama
Source: Eastern Shore Chamber of Commerce
Preferences: Housing

47% 12% 40%
Preferences: Housing

Erwin, Tennessee
Bardstown, KY: C. Bedford Crenshaw,
https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=14633816
Jonesborough, TN: User brent_nashville on flickr
Rifle, CO: User jasperdo on flickr

Davis, West Virginia

Davis image source: User jmd41280 on flickr
Small Town Housing

Cotton District
Starkville, MS

Apartments at the Blu-Buck Mercantile Hotel,
Water Valley, MS

Image sources: https://hottytoddy.com
Daily Journal (Northeast Mississippi)
Tiny Homes

Image source: picswe.net
Communities are now in a ferocious competition over creating a sense of place (whether they know it or not).
Sense of place?
Not so competitive in the 21st century
Sense of place!
Sense of place?
Sense of place!
Sense of place?
Sense of place!
Comprehensive and master planning.
Marshall, Virginia

A “Uniquely Marshall” vision:

• Retain small-town feel & character
• Close-knit neighborhoods
• Walkable residential & retail
• Interconnected grid
• Human-scaled streets

Image: www.richblessinghomes.com
The Marshall Code:
• 3 simple districts
• Supportive of businesses
• Flexibility for property owners
• Changes of uses within buildings
• Minimal historic requirements
Visioning Process:
- Expected population growth
- Retain character & open space
- Avoid sprawl & disconnected development
- Desire for live/work/play

Image: www.parksathome.com
Land Development Ordinance:

- Permitted areas of growth
- Trails & green corridors to connect villages and hamlets
- Mixed-use development
- Housing options for varied ages and income levels
- Pedestrian- and bicycle-oriented

Thompson’s Station, TN
It’s all about location
It’s all about location
It’s all about location
Your Identity is Key

In any public project you need to know:

• Who you were in the past
• Who you are now
• And who you aspire to be
Who You Were in the Past

“Meridian, with its depots, store-houses, arsenal, hospitals, offices, hotels, and cantonments no longer exists.”

General Sherman
February, 1864
Who You Were in the Past
Meridian’s Union Station
Who You Are Now
Who You Aspire to Be
Union Station at Completion

- Annually, Union Station hosts 250 events and 300,000 people
Union Station Development Results

- Private development of $165 million in surrounding area
- New life for historic structures
Restored City Hall
Restored City Hall
Restored City Hall
Restored City Hall
World Class Performances
Yes, we can read.
A few of us can even write.
Mississippi Arts and Entertainment Experience
Mississippi Arts and Entertainment Experience
Mississippi Arts and Entertainment Experience
Mississippi Children’s Museum - Meridian
It Is Critical to Engage Future Generations
What we have heard and seen so far...

1. Citizens recognize the value of this place including its natural environment and recreational access:
   
   A. Tucker County residents want to grow without negatively impacting these qualities.
   
   B. Residents see federally owned lands as an important reason for being here, but also a hindrance to progress.

1. There is a tightly defined sense of Tucker County having a good community that you can count on.

1. Residents struggle to release past losses and look to the future by creating successes that move it forward.
What we have heard and seen so far...

4. Existing broadband Internet access is wholly inadequate:
   A. Citizens don't have a grasp of the specific broadband issue - some see problem as last mile, some as the backbone
   B. Hindrance to educational process
   C. The business community is engaged on this issue and expressed an interest in helping move it forward

5. There is grave concern over population loss, particularly youth who leave after graduating high school and do not return.
What we have heard and seen so far...

6. There is an internal conflict of us versus them, including:
   A. Visitors versus residents
   B. On mountain versus off mountain
   C. Town versus town
   D. Lack of a shared vision for the county as a whole.

This carries over into the perception of how broadband Internet access would be used.
What we have heard and seen so far...

7. Our driving tour pointed to a growing variety of businesses, with evidence of investments such as coffee shops and brew pubs.
   A. People who can work across sectors, often for the benefit of the community.
   B. In certain sectors, the county plays to its strengths like expanding skiing infrastructure.

8. The library is underfunded in terms of availability of technology and other resources as well as hours.

9. Volunteers can be the ones who move the action items that come out of this workshop forward!
Taking the Long View
Taking the Long View

Source: Steve Price, Urban Advantage
Taking the Long View

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**Group Exercise**

Think about your group’s overall goal...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.M.A.R.T Actions</th>
<th>What is this and why is it important?</th>
<th>Immediate Next Steps</th>
<th>How will we know success?</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
<th>Lead and Supporting Role</th>
<th>Cost and Implementation Resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Actions should contribute to success of a goal and be SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and have a Time-frame</td>
<td>Describe this action and write out a complete and compelling sentence or two about why it’s important.</td>
<td>(Next 2 Mentics)</td>
<td>Think about metrics, numbers that are flexible and reasonable to track. Think qualitative and quantitative.</td>
<td>Short: 0-6 months, Medium: 6-12 months, Long: 1-2 years</td>
<td>Who is the primary responsible organization/person? Who will support the lead?</td>
<td>What is the cost in dollars and in time? What potential funding sources exist?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Specific**
- How will this action help reach your goal?

**Measurable**
- What should the community do within the first 100 days to implement this action?

**Achievable**
- And what are the potential challenges or roadblocks to success?

**Relevant**
- What are the short-term, medium-term, and long-term steps?

**Time Frame**
- Which individuals and entities will lead and support your action?

**Cost**
- How much will your action cost in dollars and time?

**Implementation**
- How could it be funded?
Small Group Discussions

At the restaurant, sit in four groups of 4-5 people.

1. None of the broadband case studies presented this morning fit Tucker County perfectly. How can Tucker County create a broadband plan for the entire county that fits the unique needs of each community?

2. How can the three principal towns of Tucker County work together to develop a cohesive story of Tucker County? What visual changes to each community need to be made to accomplish this?
Thank you.

Have you taken our quick broadband survey regarding your home or work Internet and mobile phone service? If not, please take it now:


John Robert Smith
Deborah Watts

Tucker County, West Virginia
June 12, 2019

More information: www.smartgrowthamerica.org