

# Carver-Piedmont Feasibility Study

Project Review & Next Steps

January 28, 2016



# Project Background

- September 2014: Partnership between RRRC, G.W. Carver Agricultural Research Center, Virginia Food Enterprise Centers (now GWCFEC) submitted grant application to Virginia DHCD
  - Included cash match in the form of grant award to VAFEC and in-kind match from RRRC (staff) and GWCFEC
- January 2015: Building Collaborative Communities grant funding awarded
- March 2015: Grant contract signed; Project kick-off meeting

# Project Goals

- Architectural/Engineering Assessment of the G.W. Carver-Piedmont Technical Center facility
  - Determine condition of main school building and outbuildings
  - Receive preliminary costs for required repairs and other recommendations
- Assess gaps and opportunities for Agriculture Research, Training, and Education for GWCARC
  - Inventory existing programs
  - Identify gaps and/or partnership opportunities
- Food Processing Feasibility Assessment
  - Broad market research
  - Targeted opportunity assessment

# Facility Assessment

- August 2015: Contracted with Spectrum Design to conduct facility assessment
- September 2015: Site visits at Carver-Piedmont, additional data gathering
- December 2015: Final report



- Main building: Good condition
- Building A: Fair condition; Significant settling issues on 'back' side (away from Rte. 15)
- Building B: Poor condition of foundation, roofing
- Building C: Good condition
- Building D: Poor condition in certain areas due to roof slope, etc.



- GWCARC holds lease on Building C
- Building A & Building D currently utilized by Culpeper County Sheriff's Office, primarily for storage
- Building B is vacant
- Main school building has one tenant that uses the auditorium



- GWCFEC has identified the Shop area and first floor of the rear 2-story portion for initial design work for processing
- Front portion of building can be utilized for workshops, classes, education, training, etc.

# Agriculture Education, Research & Training Opportunities

- Report identifies existing resources under each heading within the five-county region
- Opportunity for utilizing space at the Carver-Piedmont facility for existing and/or new programs is present
- Challenges and obstacles for each heading
- Report also includes Stone Soup project findings, preliminary New Farmers program proposal, and draft MOU between GWCARC, GWCFEC and Culpeper County developed during this process
- Report is available on RRRC website (<http://www.rrregion.org/carver.html>)



# Agriculture Education, Research & Training Opportunities

- Targeted Uses
- Regional Agriculture Training and Education Center
  - Ample classroom space (4-H, Extension, other partners)
  - Use of food processing center for food-based training (Stone Soup, etc.)
  - Outdoor learning opportunities
- New Farmers Incubator program
  - Gap between education and initial on-farm opportunities for new farmers
  - Need to coordinate with existing education providers
  - Need to formalize land-lease agreements with County and adjacent landowners

# Food Processing Feasibility Assessment

- GWCFEC and consultant Ben Craig
- Broad regional agricultural market analysis (Agriculture Census data)
- Local interviews with producers and agriculture stakeholders to affirm and/or refine preliminary data findings
- Producer focus groups and Letter of Intent (non-binding) requests to potential users
- Report is available on GWCFEC website (<http://www.gwcfec.org>)

# Food Processing Feasibility Assessment

- Union Kitchen Food Incubator report
- Designed to provide GWCFEC with guidance on:
  - Management strategy for a Food Incubator enterprise at the Carver-Piedmont center
  - Preliminary financial and budgetary needs
  - Workforce and Social Enterprise opportunities and projected benefits
  - Brand strategies
- Recommendations are being considered by GWCFEC as part of the future development of the food processing center
- Potential for Union Kitchen to operate incubator at the facility long-term

# Next Steps

- Carver-Piedmont facility
  - Owned by Culpeper County
  - Important to formalize agreement between County and GWCARC, GWC FEC for use of the buildings and county land (16+ acres)
  - County has agreed to repair septic pump, install new well as part of annual maintenance
  - Partnership worked with County to submit an application to DEQ Brownfields program for remediation of contaminants in selected areas of main school building (November 2015)
  - Culpeper County provided match for Brownfields application, along with \$150,000 allocation for making those spaces usable following remediation
- Total cost per Spectrum report is in the \$5M to \$10M range

# Next Steps

- Agriculture Education, Research and Training
  - Administrative capacity
    - Required for continued development of funding sources, outreach, and management of administrative tasks relative to the facility
  - Additional outreach to regional and statewide organizations for partnership and shared-use opportunities
    - Education: Public/Private schools, Germanna & Lord Fairfax
    - Public: VCE, 4-H, PEC, Fauquier Education Farm
    - G.W. Carver Alumni Association
  - Formalize MOU agreements with Culpeper County and adjacent landowners

# Next Steps

- Agriculture Education, Research and Training
  - Develop next round of Stone Soup training program, working with newly identified partners (Culpeper Human Services, Culpeper Head Start, Rural Madison, Rappahannock Goodwill Industries, etc.)
  - New Farmers Training Program
    - Ohrstrom Foundation application submitted October 2015

# Next Steps

- GWCFC
- Administrative Capacity
  - Needed for developing funding structure, but also to formalize organizational record-keeping
- Formalize MOU with Culpeper County
- Obtain 501(c)3 status
- Continue to explore partnerships for training and internship development
  - Outreach to Community Colleges, Coffeewood, Small Business Development Centers using existing models
- Design work for identified spaces within main school building for food processing and test kitchen design
  - Utilize Union Kitchen materials, as possible