

West End River-To-Rail Revitalization & the West Edge Factory

GOAL:

Huntington will continue the “River-to-Rail Revitalization” in the West End to reduce blight, boost a healthy local foods campaign, and create quality jobs through Coalfield Development Corporation’s new “West Edge Factory” and its innovative job programs including the Mine-the-Sun Solar Training Institute.



BACKGROUND:

River-to-Rail Initiative for West End Revitalization: When Mayor Steve Williams took office in 2013, he worked with the community to launch the “River-to-Rail” initiative. The goals of this initiative are to help transform the economically distressed West End of Huntington with job creation, blight elimination, crime reduction and rejuvenation of the Central City commercial district of the West End with The Wild Ramp and the Central City Market, the Boys & Girls Club and antique shops and restaurants on 14th Street West. River-to-Rail’s completed projects include streetscape revitalization, upgrades to the Boys & Girls Club, raingarden and green infrastructure upgrades, over 100 tree plantings and community beautification. Guided by a grassroots task force of engaged citizens, the River-to-Rail participants will continue to guide and sustain overall efforts in this section of the community.

Coalfield Development Corporation: Formed in 2009 as a not-for-profit group, Coalfield is a community-based organization focused on job training skills for opportunity youth and dislocated workers, including those stranded by the declining coal-sector economy of the region. Regionally and nationally recognized for its innovative approach, Coalfield creates quality jobs and generates opportunities for low-income families in southern West Virginia (www.Coalfield-Development.org). When Coalfield’s building crews were called in to demolish a historic but long-closed, 96,000 square foot clothing factory, Coalfield instead raised the support and leveraged the resources to buy the site and transform it into the “West Edge Factory,” it’s new base of operations for job training and social enterprise that is putting dislocated workers back into business to transform the community and region. At the West Edge Factory, Coalfield is using the “33-6-3” model, under which participants each week work for 33 hours for pay, receive 6 hours of associate’s degree education and obtain 3 hours of life and personal management skills to ensure development of the whole person. Coalfields enterprise centers include Reclaim Appalachia providing skills training in building reclamation, remediation and reuse; Revitalize Appalachia focusing on sustainable construction; Rediscover Appalachia providing training on artisan-based entrepreneurship and furniture-making; Refresh Appalachia focusing on sustainable and niche agriculture; Reawaken Appalachia for community-based real estate development; Retread Appalachian providing CDL trucking licensing; and Rewire Appalachia is training workers to be certified solar roofing and technology installers.



A key player in Huntington’s HIP Plan, Coalfield has made tremendous progress since the launch of the ABC Prize. The White House, U.S. EPA, U.S. Economic Development Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and the Appalachian Regional Commission convened in the West End and provided \$4,970,000 in leveraged resources for construction of the West Edge Factory and expansion of the Coalfield Development Corporation’s job training endeavors to a broader Appalachian region. Further, the Just Transition Fund, the Benedum Foundation, the U.S. Conference of Mayors, the J.M. Kaplan Innovation Fund, the Diehl Family Social Enterprise Competition, Enterprise Community Partners, the Wells Fargo Foundation, and ArtPlace America have provided another \$1,230,000 in philanthropic backing to boost the Coalfield Development Corporation’s model.

In June 2016, Coalfield graduated its first class of 21 entrepreneurs who have moved from distress and dislocation to new careers. Coalfield will expand this model even further, as it has created a new “Mine-the-Sun Solar Training Institute” for the training and certification of solar roof technology installers – with more than 30 solar roofs already installed or ordered by non-profits and civic organizations across West Virginia. This ranges from a new solar roof on the Catholic Charities social service building in Wheeling, WV to a new system on a County economic development division headquarters, to the largest solar facility in the entire state, a 400-kw system to be placed on the roof of the West Edge Factory itself.

The Wild Ramp and Central City Market: Huntington joined forces with innovative nonprofit organizations to transform the old, empty Central City Market into a hub for fresh, locally-grown food. The Wild Ramp, which located in the West End in May 2014, has teamed up with the Cabell County Tailgate Farmer's Market to sell healthy, locally-grown foods to the community year-round. The Wild Ramp now has more than 150 producers from within a 250-mile radius, but approximately 75 percent of those producers come from within a 50-mile radius, including high tunnel production by Coalfield's Refresh Appalachia operation (www.WildRamp.org.) In the summer 2016, federal agency leaders, the White House, U.S. Congress Members and state officials gathered with the community at the Wild Ramp to announce a major round of POWER grant funding for the Appalachian region, including for the Wild Ramp and Coalfield Development Corporation.



Heartland Intermodal Gateway: Even bigger revitalization is possible for the West End with the launch in November 2015 of the Heartland Intermodal Gateway, one of the largest rail freight intermodal hubs in the nation. Strategically located between Norfolk, Va., and Chicago, this intermodal rail-truck facility, just 12 miles south of Huntington, has direct access to the trade routes of 50 international shipping lines. This will create massive opportunities for warehousing, distribution, logistics, light manufacturing and product assembly in the region, including Huntington's West End.



OBJECTIVES: Huntington's objectives in this HIP target area are to:

-○ **Complete the renovation of the West Edge Factory as a regional jobs training, empowerment, and social enterprise center;**
-○ **Use the new Mine the Sun Solar Training Institute at West Edge to employ dislocated coal workers and re-wire West Virginia one roof at a time;**
-○ **Transform lives by putting people into family-wage jobs and giving them the skills to join the workforce;**
-○ **Create new spin-off businesses and jobs from the Heartland Intermodal Gateway in a light industrial park made up of spaces currently housing abandoned or underutilized warehouses and factories in the West End; and**
-○ **Improve quality of life through brownfields and blighted housing removal, streetscape revitalization on 14th Street West, partnerships with the Boys & Girls Club and healthy foods opportunities emerging from The Wild Ramp and Central City Market.**

TACTICS: Huntington is teamed with the River-to-Rail Revitalization Task Force, The Wild Ramp, Coalfield Development Corporation, Heartland Intermodal Gateway and other partners to accomplish the West End revitalization. Accomplishments so far:

West Edge Factory Construction: Construction drawings and plans for the renovation of West Edge are now complete, funds for complete build-out of the factory are secured, and the process of construction is underway. The West Edge Factory will be a training and social enterprise center that includes a woodworking shop, a craft furniture factory, the solar training institute, an incubator-education space for sustainable farmers as well as high tunnels on the grounds, a music studio and performance space, live/work space for artists and a retail store that can market hand-crafted goods.

Solar Enterprise: Currently, the partnership of Coalfield Development and Solar Holler (www.SolarHoller.com) is the only operating solar roofing contractor in Huntington or anywhere in the broader region. Through marketing and interaction with key leaders of civic, non-profit, and business organizations across West Virginia, this partnership is growing the number of solar roof installations throughout Appalachia. With 21 certified solar workers already, Coalfield will be able to expand this enterprise with the new Mine-the-Sun Training Institute now completed at West Edge.

New Freight Enterprises in Now-Vacant Buildings and Brownfields: The empty warehouse and factory space and vacant lots in Huntington's West End that are right along the I-64 Corridor will be included in a study undertaken by Advantage Valley (a regional economic development group) that will identify and prioritize developable sites along the I-64 Corridor between Huntington and Charleston, WV. This effort will be coupled with a parallel effort to explore the creation of a site development fund to bring a prioritized list of sites to the shovel ready stage. It will also support action by the Huntington Area Development Council and the Huntington Municipal Development Authority to acquire, assemble, rehabilitate or demolish these former factories and warehouses and put them back into productive use to serve the Heartland Intermodal Gateway.

Streetscape Revitalization of the West End Core on 14th Street West: The River-to-Rail Task Force and other community partners have secured public and private funds to upgrade the Gazebo, install bike racks, plant 100 trees, refurbish and replant large corner entrance planters, install green infrastructure, add to the public art "Quilt Trail" and create two façade murals. A local commercial bakery located on 14th Street West has invested in paving its parking lot and loading dock incorporating green infrastructure thereby reducing storm water issues. Approximately 20 blighted former houses will be demolished, and this core neighborhood revitalization continues to expand.

RESOURCES + RELATIONSHIPS

Resources:

As described above, Coalfield Development Corporation has already secured \$6.2 million since the launch of the ABC Prize from federal, state, local, banking, and philanthropic sources. Further, the West End's River-to-Rail Revitalization has secured an anonymous \$100,000 gift from a private donor for demolition of blighted housing and \$375,000 of investment in improving site infrastructure by a local bakery and miscellaneous donations and gifts totaling over \$110,000.

KEY PARTNER ROLES:

City of Huntington – Serves as facilitator and applicant for federal dollars when necessary

River-to-Rail Task Force – This grassroots task force of neighborhood, nonprofit, business and civic leaders from the West End will continue to guide and support the revitalization of this neighborhood, including through the West Edge Factory and Solar Holler initiatives

Coalfield Development Corporation – Leader of the social enterprise that is creating West Edge and training its high-skills workers

JM Kaplan Foundation – Coalfield’s Executive Director, Brandon Dennison, is the winner of the 2015 JMK Social Innovation Prize of \$175,000, one of only 10 selected in a national competition of more than 1,100 proposals. Beyond dollars, this prize brings the support of the Foundation to encourage and advise on the projects of Coalfield.

Solar Holler – a company dedicated to bringing solar photovoltaic to communities using innovative and affordable financing models;

Layne Consulting, Inc. – Works to advise and support Coalfield Development and to design and carry out its capital campaign

Foundation for the Tri-State Community – Works to advise and support Coalfield Development and is the manager of the funds raised in its capital campaign. The Foundation also raises and manages funds for tree planting and beautification.

Huntington Area Development Council – This non-profit economic and industrial development organization will help recruit new business investment into the vacant spaces in the West End that will be attracted by the new Heartland Intermodal Gateway and West Edge Factory innovation.

Advantage Valley – Regional economic development organization undertaking the study to identify developable sites along I-64 corridor and to investigate the creation of a site development fund.

HOW SUSTAINABLE SUCCESS WILL BE MEASURED OVER THE FUTURE: The City of Huntington will work with its River-to-Rail task force, Coalfield Development Corporation and others to track, evaluate and disseminate information on progress and outcomes, gauged by milestones which include:

-○ Extent of the West Edge Factory building converted to fully envisioned use for Coalfield’s social enterprise activities;
-○ Number of solar roofs installed by Coalfield crews, in terms of roof sizes, kilowatts capacity, distribution among different kinds of buildings, and money saved by entities with the new roofs;
-○ Number of workers, including wage ranges, who succeed in becoming trained in solar roofing, agriculture, construction, carpentry and craft furniture-making, and number who succeed in maintaining full employment levels
-○ Number of facade and other improvements on 14th Street West and other key corridors
-○ Number of blighted houses rehabilitated, demolished or otherwise improved
-○ Number of rain gardens installed and urban trees planted in the neighborhood

Fairfield Innovation Corridor

GOAL:

To create the Fairfield Innovation Corridor in the Fairfield East and West neighborhoods including: upgrade the one-mile Hal Greer Boulevard gateway corridor into Huntington bisecting the neighborhoods into a “complete street”; transform the Northcott Court barracks-style public housing site into a mixed-use and mixed-income community hub; and create a health- and medical- jobs sector and opportunities for healthy living and recreation. The Fairfield Innovation Corridor will create a healthy and connected community in one of Huntington’s most distressed areas.

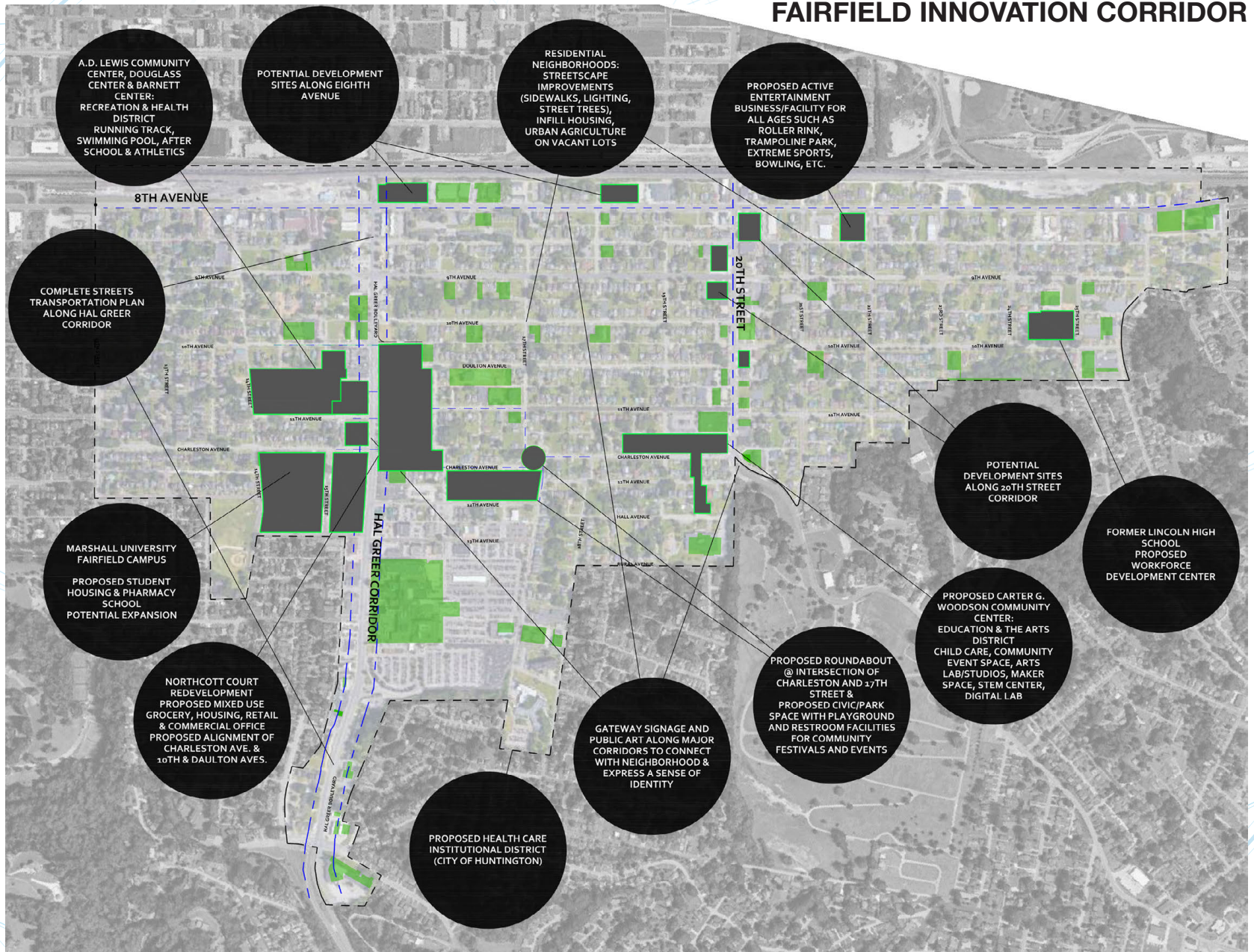
BACKGROUND:

Fairfield Alliance: The Fairfield Alliance was inspired by the ABC Prize and formed as a part of the HIP Plan. The Alliance is made up of representatives from all who live, work and play in this geographic region. When formed, it was the first time that the City, residents, African-American leaders, Cabell-Huntington Hospital, Marshall University, philanthropy, businesses, the Housing Authority, Marshall Health, and state leaders had sat at the table together to discuss common issues and concerns. By building bridges across the divides between the residents and the other entities, the Alliance has been able to undertake and complete a consensus revitalization plan and develop a level of communication which had not previously been possible. The Alliance is using anchor institution strategies to spur revitalization and investment in the Fairfield Innovation Corridor.

Fairfield Anchor Strategy: The Chairs of the Fairfield Alliance, the City of Huntington, Cabell Huntington Hospital, Marshall University, the Joan C. Edwards School of Medicine, Marshall Health (the faculty practice of the School of Medicine), and the Huntington Housing Authority have all executed a Memorandum of Understanding agreeing to collaborate on Fairfield revitalization projects such as the Northcott Court redevelopment, the submission of a HUD Choice Neighborhood grant, investments in the health, sports and recreation district, the complete street upgrades to Hal Greer, community programs and other initiatives. This MOU, together with the Fairfield Alliance, will ensure sustainable momentum on the Fairfield endeavor.

Heritage Farm Forum: A group of community leaders formed the Heritage Farm Forum to bring together the resources of Marshall University and the community to enhance education and create jobs. It has hosted numerous annual forums at Heritage Farm and Village Museum with varying topics. For the past two years since the launch of the ABC Prize and the Fairfield Innovation Corridor, this Forum has focused exclusively on the healthcare resources in the region as a driver for economic growth. The first forum convening in 2016 was very successful and articulated to the community the strength our healthcare system brings to economic development. The next forum will focus specifically on the development and enhancement of a community health & research center with job attraction coming from the supply chain; specialized healthcare businesses that provide such services as genetic sequencing, specialized monitoring of building environments, cutting edge diagnostics and consumer-targeted monitor wearables; and the commercialization of research. As these innovative health-sector businesses emerge, Huntington will seek to direct this enterprise to the vacant and blighted lots in the Fairfield Corridor, in order to drive the health economy there and provide opportunities for family-wage, 21st century jobs for neighborhood residents.

FAIRFIELD INNOVATION CORRIDOR



Fairfield HUD Choice Neighborhood Grant Work Team: This Work Team was formed to pursue a U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Choice Neighborhood Grant. The Choice Neighborhood program provides funding and other support to create neighborhood transformation around the revitalization of severely distressed public housing – like the Northcott Court public housing on Hal Greer Boulevard. The Grant Work Team convened residents and representatives from the major anchors in Fairfield, together with expert consultants and support organizations. This Team met diligently from August through December 2016, and prepared a report of their findings focusing on three categories, Housing, Neighborhood and People, which dovetails with the grant. This effort will be the basis of the grant when it is prepared and submitted later in 2017.

OBJECTIVES: Huntington’s objectives in the Fairfield Innovation Corridor are to:

-○ **Renew the Northcott Court public housing slums with a new mixed-use, mixed-income complex to include sustainable mixed-income and market housing, a quality grocery store to serve this food desert, commercial offices for health-based enterprises, and additional retail space for neighborhood amenities.**
-○ **Improve the safety, beauty and sustainability along a key one-mile segment of Hal Greer Boulevard by designing and constructing complete street upgrades including walkability and biking improvements, traffic calming, and green infrastructure for storm water and other ecological improvements.**
-○ **Develop a Health, Sport and Recreation District centered around the existing A.D. Lewis Community Center, the Douglass Centre and the Erma Byrd Center for Health that will all be connected by landscaped walkways and paths.**
-○ **Strengthen the existing Fairfield Alliance and the relationships among its members and encourage investment by the anchor members in the Fairfield community.**
-○ **Develop a Community Arts District which would encompass a newly constructed community flexible space that would house a police satellite station, a daycare for children and seniors, event rental space and art/museum space for both visual and performing arts in close proximity to Spring Hill Elementary School.**
-○ **Demolish blighted structures, and grow home ownership, market housing and housing maintenance.**
-○ **Develop job preparation programs including, mentoring, leadership, tutoring, entrepreneurial training, and college prep.**
-○ **Enhance the safety of the entire area**
-○ **Grow the number of jobs available in the healthcare ecosystem**

TACTICS: The Fairfield neighborhood along Hal Greer Boulevard is underway with positive transformation using these tactics:

Northcott Revitalization: The core of the vision for Fairfield revitalization is to take advantage of the prime location and 20,000 daily traffic count at the former Northcott Court area to create a new mixed-use, mixed-income sustainable development to serve the neighborhood. The Huntington Housing Authority is moving forward on a plan for the construction of a mix of affordable workforce housing, market rate housing, retail spaces, and a grocery store for this food desert.

Creating a Health Innovation Corridor: Using the Fairfield Alliance, the Anchor Institutions MOU, and the Heritage Farm Forum, Huntington will enhance the health-based sector, attract medical and health-focused research and innovation, and increase the number of jobs in the healthcare ecosystem to provide opportunities at mixed-skill levels.

Greening the Hal Boulevard Corridor for Community Health: An effective health corridor is more than growing the medical and health-related institutions on the roadway. It is also about creating a neighborhood that is more walkable, green and livable. Backed by the U.S. Secretary of Transportation, the WV Secretary of Transportation, and Senator Joe Manchin, Huntington is collaborating with the WV Department of Transportation, KYOVA Interstate Transportation Planning, and the Federal Highways Administration to upgrade the wide and unsafe Hal Greer Boulevard into a complete street. The State and region have funded and launched a Corridor Management Plan to design, engineer, and leverage resources for the construction of wider sidewalks, traffic calming measures, crosswalks, a dedicated bike lane, and streetscaping that incorporates an expanded urban tree canopy and green infrastructure for storm water management.

Construction of a new Marshall University School of Pharmacy and student housing complex in the Fairfield area.

Safe Streets & Neighborhoods Strategy: After violent crime and open-air drug activity in the neighborhoods located along Hal Greer Boulevard reached a peak in 2005 with the deaths of four high school students, Huntington adopted an aggressive community policing and “Weed and Seed” approach to public safety in this neighborhood. This resulted in a 35 percent decrease in drug offenses and 28 percent decrease in violent crime in this neighborhood. Huntington plans to enhance neighborhood safety even further now with targeted police patrols that will be directed via high-tech GIS and data analytics. As Huntington moves into more pro-active “seeding” approaches of urban and neighborhood revitalization, the Police Department will continue its community policing approach.

Removal of Blighted and Problematic Housing: The Huntington Housing Authority, Housing Development Corporation, Huntington Urban Renewal Authority, the City’s Code Enforcement Unit, the Huntington Land Bank and others are partnering on a major effort to acquire blighted and dilapidated houses. They will be transformed into livable, affordable housing. Huntington Urban Renewal Authority has acquired 30 dilapidated houses and, working with Habitat for Humanity and the Housing Development Corporation, the community has created more than 50 affordable duplex, senior, and multi-family units. In 2013, Huntington developed and approved new smart-growth zoning and established the Fairfield West Redevelopment Plan. The tipping point has now come with the decision and steady action to demolish and remove the blighted, crime-plagued, 1940s barrack-style Northcott Court public housing complex centrally located on Hal Greer Boulevard. The first demolitions came in 2014, and this removal continues today.

Healthy Foods Initiative: Coalfield Development Corporation and its “Refresh Appalachia” institute has partnered with Cabell-Huntington Hospital to establish a community garden and high tunnel growing system to employ nine (9) new workers from the Fairfield neighborhood to produce healthy foods and agricultural products for the Cabell Huntington Hospital and local citizens.

RESOURCES + RELATIONSHIPS

Resources: Huntington used its ABC Prize Finalist winnings to secure the National Development Council, the nation’s longest-serving non-profit in community development finance, with a focus on distressed communities and neighborhoods. With expert finance advice, major enterprise funds for community investment, and access to innovative bonding tools for public-private partnerships, the National Development Council has played a substantial role in the Fairfield revitalization, devised a strong financing plan for the Northcott Court revitalization, and identified financing strategies for our goals.

Secured: Already, millions of dollars of local funding from the Huntington Housing Authority, the Huntington Urban Renewal Authority, and other city agencies are being used along with Low Income Housing Tax Credits and other public resources for the blight removal and community rebuilding process. Cabell-Huntington Hospital has committed \$50,000 as one-half of the match for the HUD Choice Neighborhood Grant to be submitted in 2017. Based on close collaboration, Huntington expects that the cost for construction of the complete street upgrade of Hal Greer Boulevard will be borne by the WV DOT and KYOVA Interstate Planning. Marshall Health has invested \$1,126,100 million in The Douglass Centre, the historic African-American former high school, and plans to invest an estimated \$3,000,000 more to bring the building to full use as a community center and public health center. In a story of inspiration, a local high school senior named Chip Sweeney, who was inspired by the Fairfield project and the ABC Prize competition, planned and conducted a celebrity bingo event with former pro football star, Troy Brown, providing \$30,000 to help fund sports upgrades to the A.D. Lewis Community Center. This helped inspire Marshall University to consider a major gift to the A.D. Lewis Center to restore its running track.

Huntington is very pleased that the AFL-CIO has committed to the Fairfield Innovation Corridor, including the development of the new Northcott Court mixed-use hub. The AFL-CIO seeks to bring the resources of its “Housing Investment Trust” or “HIT” to the Northcott project. One of the earliest and most successful practitioners of socially responsible, economically targeted investing in America, HIT has invested over \$2 million and leveraged over \$4.8 billion for housing and community development initiatives that “bring Wall Street to Main Street” and support thousands of union construction jobs. The AFL-CIO also runs a community development entity that invests New Market Tax Credit proceeds into community revitalization projects. The AFL-CIO is a key partner in the Northcott project, and has conveyed its solid interest in investing and supporting this initiative.

In January 2017, the Center for Community Progress, the nation’s leading organization supporting efforts to fight blight and vacant properties, chose Huntington, WV as one of only five national finalists in its “Vacant Properties Technical Assistance Program.” Huntington is now receiving an expert assessment and evaluation of the community’s blight elimination tools and, if selected as one of the three winners, Huntington will receive \$150,000 in technical assistance from some of the nation’s top experts on these community revitalization strategies.

KEY PARTNER ROLES:

City of Huntington – Complete street design and improvements, leadership on design and support of Northcott Court revitalization and management of HUD grant.

Huntington Housing Authority and the Huntington Housing Development Corporation – Continued leadership in the creation of new affordable and mixed-income housing in the neighborhoods surrounding Hal Greer Boulevard, and key role in public-private partnership to redevelop Northcott Court.

Fairfield Alliance – The Alliance will serve as a community visioning group and a way to build relationships to aid in the anchor strategy revitalization of Fairfield. It will provide oversight of the master planning process.

Cabell Huntington Hospital – Funder of Fairfield revitalization projects, and key driver of the expansion of the health-sector economy on Hal Greer Boulevard.

Marshall University and the Joan C. Edwards School of Medicine – Relocate the Marshall School of Pharmacy and student housing complex to vacant land on Hal Greer Boulevard.

Fairfield HUD Choice Neighborhood Grant Work Team – The Fairfield HUD Choice Neighborhood Grant Work Team will lead the effort to develop, submit and advocate for this grant.

Huntington Black Pastors Ministerial Association – Will serve as a sounding board for projects and programs growing out of the planning process and will aid in the dissemination of information to the community.

Coalfield Development Corporation – Refresh Appalachia – Will develop a location in Fairfield to construct high tunnels to grow vegetables employing Fairfield residents in its program for sale to Cabell Huntington Hospital and neighborhood residents.

Housing Investment Trust of the AFL-CIO – Has provided a letter of interest in aiding in the financing of the Northcott Court project.

West Virginia AFL-CIO – Will provide pre-apprentice mentoring and training to prepare Fairfield residents to enter its apprenticeship program.

National Development Council – Providing support to establish capital stack for Northcott Court redevelopment.

Marshall Health – The faculty practice of the Medical School is a part of the team investing in the Health, Sports and Recreation District in Fairfield.

HOW SUSTAINABLE SUCCESS WILL BE MEASURED OVER THE FUTURE: The City will work with the health-care institutions, Marshall University and neighborhood groups to regularly track, access, disseminate and evaluate information on the following factors:

-○ Levels of commitment and funding of key partners for Northcott revitalization, and timeline for construction of the new development hub;
-○ Levels of commitment and funding by key partners for Hal Greer complete street transformation;
-○ Number of new health and medical sector jobs created for all skill levels along the Fairfield Innovation Corridor;
-○ Number of blighted and uninhabitable housing structures removed;
-○ Number of affordable and market housing units created;
-○ Number of owner occupied homes created;
-○ Continued levels of reduced crime and drug activity;
-○ Number of urban trees and green infrastructure facilities deployed in revitalization projects;
-○ WalkScore level increases on corridor after implementation of projects;
-○ Amount of sales and pounds of produce grown by Coalfield Development in Fairfield Neighborhood; and
-○ Number of residents employed by Coalfield Development’s Refresh Appalachia from the Fairfield neighborhood



Gigabit City



GOAL:

The City of Huntington will partner with the private sector to design, engineer, fund, and construct a \$24 million, gigabit-speed broadband upgrade on key corridors and in targeted areas that have already been identified by the “Gigabit City” initiative sponsored by the West Virginia Broadband Development Council. This upgrade will connect established broadband hotspots at Marshall University, Cabell Huntington Hospital, and St. Mary’s Medical Center to newly-deployed gigabit infrastructure in downtown Huntington, the Highlawn riverfront, the Fairfield Innovation Corridor, and the West End revitalization areas.

BACKGROUND:

In 2013, the Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission issued a “Gigabit City Challenge” calling on all states to deploy gigabit-speed Internet access in at least one city. The State of West Virginia and its Broadband Enhancement Council chose Huntington as its pilot city and, in 2014, a gigabit feasibility study was developed. Huntington has now established a city-wide broadband viability analysis, street-by-street network geospatial mapping analysis with initial design scenarios, a network-cost analysis, a demand and use analysis, and a pricing plan analysis for capital debt service and operations.

This pilot feasibility study has identified a core gigabit deployment with a project cost of \$24 million that would be feasible from a physical and financial standpoint. It is providential that the most feasible locations for Huntington gigabit broadband deployment are the very areas targeted for HIP economic revitalization.

Huntington formed a Gigabit City Team made up of professionals with high levels of expertise in IT, including the WV State GIS Coordinator of the West Virginia Broadband Enhancement Council, the directors of IT for Marshall University and the Joan C. Edwards School of Medicine, the executive director of KYOVA Interstate Planning, Huntington’s federal funding consultant, as well as others. The Gigabit City Team established a target “fiberhood” pilot area that would follow Hal Greer Boulevard through the center of the Fairfield Innovation Corridor, adjacent to the Marshall University campus and downtown, to the area targeted for the Huntington/Highlawn Brownfields Innovation Zone, including Highlawn neighborhoods and St. Mary’s Hospital. The Gigabit City Team also determined how Huntington could work with private sector broadband developers and providers to explore the potential for a public-private partnership to implement this initiative. The City Council is now adopting a “Dig Once” Policy. The team has developed a source document for possible public grant funding for the project. The City has also issued a Request for Information due June 2017 to private providers to make proposals for models to carry out this initiative.

OBJECTIVES:

-○ **Deploy gigabit-speed broadband infrastructure to key commercial, educational, and health assets, including areas targeted for revitalization under the HIP community revitalization plan;**
-○ **Use Gigabit City progress to attract the best and brightest companies, entrepreneurs, millennials, and investors to Huntington.**

TACTICS:

Huntington is ready to move forward on implementing the Gigabit City program to connect and unleash our key economic hubs.

Review responses to request for information: The Gigabit City Team will appoint a review group to evaluate the RFI responses and do a comparative analysis of models proposed in Summer 2017

Establish Public-Private Partnership: Huntington will form a partnership with a private sector broadband developer/operator for the Gigabit City deployment, with agreements on priority deployment areas, financing, price/rate agreements, and operation.

Design & Engineer the Network: Huntington will facilitate a plan for public-private financing to conduct a more thorough design and engineering of the broadband deployment.

Funding the Deployment: A key task will be finalizing the funding/financing model for the initiative, which could include municipal bonding, TIF financing, private equity and debt contributions to be repaid with rate returns, and/or grants from the West Virginia Broadband Enhancement Council or federal economic development programs.

Deployment: Huntington will seek to deploy the gigabit system in 2020.

Expansion of Fiberhood: After deployment of the pilot fiberhood, Huntington will explore expanding the deployment to the West End and other parts of the City using lessons learned in the pilot fiberhood project.

RESOURCES + RELATIONSHIPS

Resources: Huntington was already designated the pilot community for the West Virginia Gigabit City initiative, and the City and its partners have established a comprehensive feasibility study. Huntington now seeks to develop an appropriate model to leverage local bonding/financing tools together with a private sector partner's resources, along with potential state and federal grants and financial incentives, for the design and deployment of the system.

KEY PARTNER ROLES:

City of Huntington – Form public-private partnership; role in funding/financing

Marshall University – Major user of gigabit broadband, support for design project

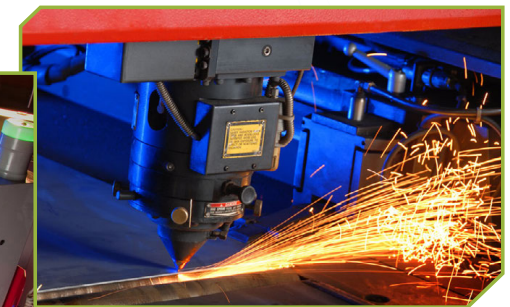
West Virginia Broadband Enhancement Council – Guidance on deployment design

Private Sector Partner – Key role in design, engineering, funding, deployment and long-term operations

HOW SUSTAINABLE SUCCESS WILL BE MEASURED FOR THE FUTURE: The Huntington Gigabit City team will regularly track, assess, report, and evaluate for improvements the following milestones and targets:

-○ Number of households, businesses, students, health care providers, and institutions reached with gigabit speed broadband deployments in boosting HIP initiatives on Ohio Riverfront, Fairfield and West End;
-○ Additional private sector economic investment in areas that obtain gigabit access

GIGABIT CITY



Photos courtesy of RCBI and Edward Tucker Architects

Engaging Huntington & the Appalachian Region

The vision and action strategy for the Huntington HIP revitalization has emerged from a robust, ongoing community engagement process that has truly energized the city. The HIP Plan serves as a record of a key touchstone point in the Huntington endeavor to move these initiatives to fruition and to create real benefit for all citizens. Moreover, Huntington seeks to use HIP to benefit the Tri-State region, and to be a model for economic transition and vibrancy in the Appalachian region around us.

This section of the plan describes how Huntington is engaging its citizens, neighborhoods, key organizations, and the broader region in an effort to create America's best community. It explains how Huntington has:

-○ **Organized a Strong Leadership Team to lead Huntington's HIP Community Revitalization Plan;**
-○ **Engaged Key Organizations, Stakeholders, and Citizens to inform and enhance the Huntington HIP plan;**
-○ **Utilized Project Teams to propel the key HIP initiatives;**
-○ **Leveraged Additional Investment into the Huntington HIP revitalization; and**
-○ **Spread the excitement to the broader Appalachian region**



Huntington HIP Teams

The Huntington HIP Revitalization has been led and coordinated by Huntington Mayor Steve Williams, Foundation for the Tri-State Community President Mary Witten Wiseman, former City Manager Margaret Mary Layne, City of Huntington Communications Director Bryan Chambers, Coalfield Development Executive Director Brandon Dennison, Tri-Fecta Productions owner Joe Murphy, Edward Tucker Architects principal Phoebe Randolph and community revitalization consultant Matt Ward of the national firm Sustainable Strategies DC. This core group was the best able to inspire community participation, facilitate the creation of a vision, and mobilize resources for implementation. This core group formulated key concepts for the initiative, convened key entities and individuals to lead core projects and components, facilitated public engagement and interaction, and led the creation and implementation of the HIP Plan. This core team also conducted substantial interaction with key City of Huntington departmental leads and their staff to plan and implement the HIP revitalization.

The leadership team was guided by a robust and diverse team of public, private, academic, and non-profit representatives who formed the ABC Executive Work Group. The Work Group held in-depth workshop meetings to review, discuss, and confirm Huntington HIP concepts and plans and to ensure that these plans were realistic, achievable, and connected to real community needs. The Work Group was also engaged in the initial creation of the HIP plan. These individuals are at the forefront of Huntington's revitalization, and closely tuned to the needs of the economically distressed neighborhoods and struggling citizens who most need this endeavor to succeed. The Executive Work Group was composed of the following 30+ representatives:

Mayor Steve Williams

Tom Bell, Director, Huntington Municipal Development Authority

Cathy Burns, City Manager, and former President, Huntington Chamber of Commerce

Lisa Chamberlin, VP Strategic Marketing and Planning, Cabell Huntington Hospital

Bryan Chambers, Communications Director, City of Huntington

Chris Chiles, Executive Director, Region II Planning & Development Council/KYOVA Interstate Planning Commission

Sandra Clements, Co-Chair of Fairfield Alliance / Former City Councilmember

Michele Craig, retired Executive Director, Region II Planning & Development Council / KYOVA Interstate Planning Commission

Ed Dawson, Executive Editor/Publisher, The Herald-Dispatch Newspaper

Brandon Dennison, Executive Director, Coalfield Development Corporation

Mike Emerson, CEO, Huntington Steel

Kevin Fowler, CEO, Cabell Huntington Hospital / Co-Chair of Fairfield Alliance

Dr. Jerome Gilbert, President, Marshall University

Kevin Gremse, Senior Director, National Development Council

Beth Hammers, Executive Director, Marshall Health / Marshall Medical School

Brandi Jacobs-Jones, Chief of Staff & SVP for Operations, Marshall University

Margaret Mary Layne, President, Layne Consulting, Inc., former City Manager

Vickie Lester, Executive Director, Huntington WV Housing Authority

Alan Letton, President, Rubberlite, Inc.

David Lieving, Executive Director, Huntington Area Development Council

John Maher, Executive Director, Marshall University Research Corporation

Bishop Samuel Moore, Huntington Black Pastors Ministerial Association / Fairfield West community

Joe Murphy, Tri-Fecta Productions

Robert Plymale, Associate Vice President, Marshall University Research Corporation for Economic Development / WV State Senator

Phoebe Randolph, Principal in Edward Tucker Architects

Donna Rumbaugh, President, the Neighborhood Institute of Huntington

Bishop Charles Shaw, President, Huntington Black Pastors Ministerial Association / Fairfield West community

Wendy Thomas, Retired Educator, Fairfield West community leader, board member Huntington WV Housing Authority

Matt Ward, CEO, Sustainable Strategies DC

Monte Ward, Chief Financial Officer, Cabell Huntington Hospital

Mary Witten Wiseman, President of the Foundation for the Tri-State Community

Community Engagement

With a strong concept for the Huntington HIP revitalization approach formed by the core team and the Work Group, Huntington took the concept to the broader public, to obtain input and guidance from key organizations, stakeholders, and citizens. This community engagement included:

Community Stakeholders: Huntington has engaged 80+ key stakeholders representing neighborhoods, organizations, institutions, academics, business, local government, non-profit, and other entities that have been convened, consulted, and kept in the loop on the development of the Huntington HIP revitalization. These folks are also our representatives out in the community engaging citizens on the HIP revitalization and its progress. This diverse group includes local officials, Marshall University stakeholders, economic development and planning organizations, labor unions, manufacturers, business leaders, health and hospital leaders, infrastructure agencies, public safety officials, the media, transportation entities, philanthropic foundations, healthy foods non-profits, art and cultural organizations, banks, realtors, railroads, maker movement organizations, churches, housing authorities, state and federal elected representatives, state and federal agency leaders, and others representing the assets, diversity, and hope of Huntington. The City has a well-crafted contact database that enables it to reach out to these key stakeholders on a regular basis about our plans, progress, and needs for community input.

Public Meetings: Huntington has conducted a series of public and key stakeholder meetings, with information and outreach provided by both traditional and social media, to discuss the concepts and plans for HIP. This includes two workshops at which the team convened our stakeholders to unveil the final plan draft, take input, and build community excitement for this effort.

Common Story Forum: Huntington convened in August 2015 a “Common Story” forum led by the Marshall Center for Business and Economic Research, which brought together 25 representatives from key entities to identify the most important community values, needs, and ideas that were shared among the Huntington community, and to discuss how these perspectives aligned with the Huntington HIP plan. These stakeholders met as a group, and also broke into five task forces to discuss the most important concerns and needs in the community, and the keys to enabling progress and change on those concerns. This session focused on a wide range of topics including livability, economic development, jobs, housing, infrastructure, education, workforce development, crime, taxation, and other issues.

