Cosby 2030:
Ramping up the Future

A cooperative effort among
Citizens of Cosby
Appalachian Regional Commission
UT Graduate Planning Program
Community Partnership Center
Project Goals:
To work with the citizens of Cosby to articulate the community’s character; determine its needs or problems; and identify appropriate, sustainable, and innovative local solutions.
University of Tennessee participants

- Dr. Bruce Tonn
- Dr. Tim Ezzell
- Eric Ogle
- Rhiannon Chambers
- Em Turner Chitty
- Kendra Creekmore
- Jill Gilbert
- Tim Hendrick
- Reed Hillen

- Nathan Oliver
- Anne Opachick
- Austin Rogers
- Anna Shell
- Halie Shell
- Russell Shelton
- Virginia Shoemaker
- Derek Street
- Matthew Wiggins
Studies in Sustainability

Economically Viable, Environmentally Sound, Socially Responsible

New Bedford, MA: Focus - waste reduction, solar
Jackson Meadows, MN: Focus - natural water treatment/drainage, land preserves
Kaikoura District, New Zealand: Focus - waste reduction/recycling
Chattanooga, TN: Focus - reconnecting to Tennessee River, revitalizing economy in a sustainable manner.
Demographics of Cosby

Population: 5,201 (U.S.Census 2000)

Industries:
- Manufacturing jobs largely not in Cosby itself
- Residents go to Newport for jobs
- Some tourism related to Great Smoky Mountains National Park and local culture
- Agritourism

Median Household Income: $26,533

Per Capita Income: $13,000
- 67% of single mothers below poverty line
Cosby Snapshot

• **Location:** A narrow valley between English and Green mountains in East Tennessee
  – 10 miles south of Newport, county seat of Cocke County

• **Watershed:** Cosby Creek

• **Attractions:** Cosby Creek Campground
  – Relic of 1930s-era Civilian Conservation Corps activities in National Park
Culture

Cosby is a conservative East Tennessee community with strong family and religious ties.

Traditional music and arts, plus several artisans active in the Art and Craft Guild of the Smokies ("largest group of independent artisans in America").

Increasing numbers of newcomers changing the cultural mix of Cosby.
Workshop 1

- **Presentation**
  - Discussed the idea of sustainability
  - Presented case studies

- **Breakout Groups**
  - Break out groups brainstormed together.
  - Openly discussed visions and goals
  - Developed visions and goals

- **Regroup**
  - Collectively presented visions and goals
  - Ideas were then shared with the whole group.
  - Many ideas overlapped between groups
Project Idea: Community and Tourism

Development

Community Center & Park
- Provide facilities for community events
- Provide park for local residents

Visitors Center
- Highlight Cosby for tourists
- Provide information on local businesses

Heritage Center
- Highlight local culture
- Provide source of revenue by holding music classes

Music Venue
- Designated area for local artists
- Emphasize local bluegrass

Farmers Market
- Provide stable area for selling produce
- Provide safer environment than roadside stands

Recycling
- Allow for more accessible recycling program
- Reduce waste in landfill
Project Idea: Energy and Agriculture

Alternative Energy
Multiple Opportunities
  • Biofuel
  • Solar
  • Geothermal
• Allow community to be more self-reliant and sustainable
• Contribute to job base

Community Cooperative
• Share resources and information
• Promote branding
• Increase advertising
• Increase revenue
• Establish Cosby Website
  • Ecotourism

Student Agriculture
• Invest in the youth of Cosby
• Nurture interest in agricultural careers
Project Idea: Workforce Development

Wireless Internet
- E-Business
- Enhance ability to attract new business
- Expand job base

Adult Education
- Increase local job quality
- Improve employee qualifications
- Retain more members of the community who would otherwise commute or move for work

Home-Based Work
- E-business
- Create telecommuting opportunities
Project Idea: Infrastructure Development

Incorporation
- Stronger county representation
- Formal structure for decision-making process
- Greater overall control of community development

Fire Protection Services
- Currently Shared Services with county are inefficient
- Establish Cosby Fire Service
- Better Service
- Better Protection

Greenways & Trails
- Create trail system to make use of natural resources
- Help immerse tourists and residents in nature
Workshop 2

- Overview of Workshop 1
- 5 Project Breakout Groups
- Description of Projects
- Community Feedback on Projects
Project Groups

• Projects placed in groups of three with similar themes:
  – Community / Heritage Group
  – Entertainment / Culture Group
  – Energy / Agriculture Group
  – Education / Economy Group
  – Government / Infrastructure Group

• Each project presented to breakout groups

• All projects summarized on one-page handouts for participants to take with them
Community Feedback

• Community members gave comments and concerns about projects after the descriptions.
• Based on this feedback, sections of projects were changed to give the community what is wanted and needed.
Big Tent social network site

Purposes:

- To increase public participation in planning the community
- To provide a calendar for community announcements
- To provide a forum for public discussion
- To encourage Cosby residents to take action
Next Steps

- Find funding – grants, donors, non-profit organizations
- Locate available land for proposals that require land
- Help in writing grants
- Continue to foster public participation/discussion
- Organize groups/task force groups
- Hand over Big Tent network website to residents.