



# Small Towns, Big Change

Civic engagement and rural resilience

Western Community Assessment Network  
(WeCAN)

# Presenters



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# Welcome to WeCAN!

- **Three-year, USDA-funded collaboration among three states**
- **Seek to understand, evaluate and improve review process**
- **Help participating communities achieve greater success**

***Community Reviews.*** *A comprehensive assessment program that provides information and tools to help communities address priorities and enhance the quality of life for residents.*

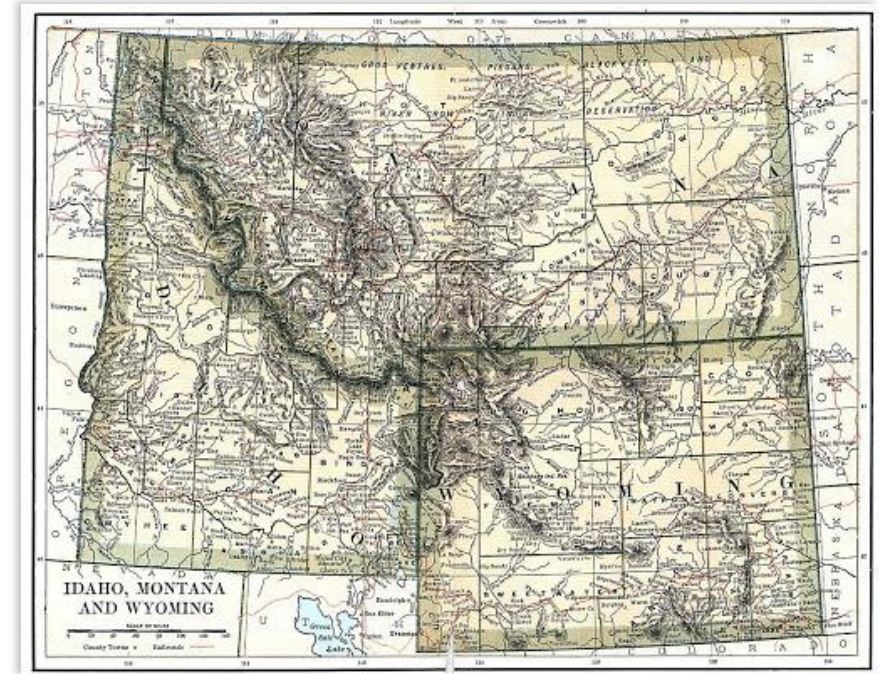
# What we'll cover

- **Evolution of assessment programs in three states**
- **WeCAN genesis and overview**
- **Assessments redesigned**
- **Future of WeCAN**
- **YOU!**



# Panel: Wyoming, Montana, Idaho

- How did state assessment program evolve over the past 20 years?
- What were the strengths of the program as it was structured?
- What were the challenges?





# WeCAN Genesis and Overview





# Why WeCAN?

- **Citizen dialogue**
- **Assessment follow up**
- **Uneven success**
- **Resources**
- **Evaluation**
  - Best practices
  - Network weaving



# Tri-State Design Team



**Boise 2017**



**Anaconda 2018**



**Idaho Falls 2019**

- **Three states, three years**
- **\$500,000 (USDA NIFA AFRI)**
- **\$40,000 (Kettering Foundation)**



**Dayton, OH 2019**



# Deliverables

- **Community assessments and evaluation**
- **Mini grants**
- **Capacity building**
- **Best practices publication**
- **Web site [communityreview.org](http://communityreview.org)**
  - Resource directory
  - Assessment map
  - How to participate



# Assessment teams

- Listen and observe
- Facilitate dialogue
- Support leadership development
- Share community organizing skills
- Help identify local/non-local resources appropriate to each community.

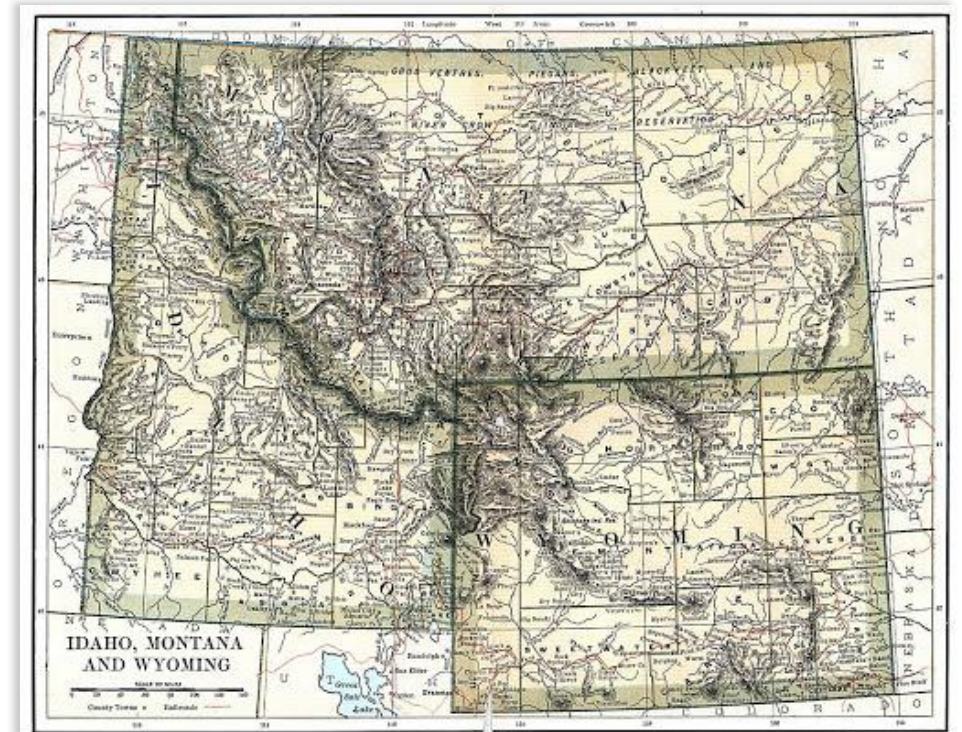




# Redesign components by state

1. How is your state program structured now?
2. Advantages of new process
3. What challenges remain?

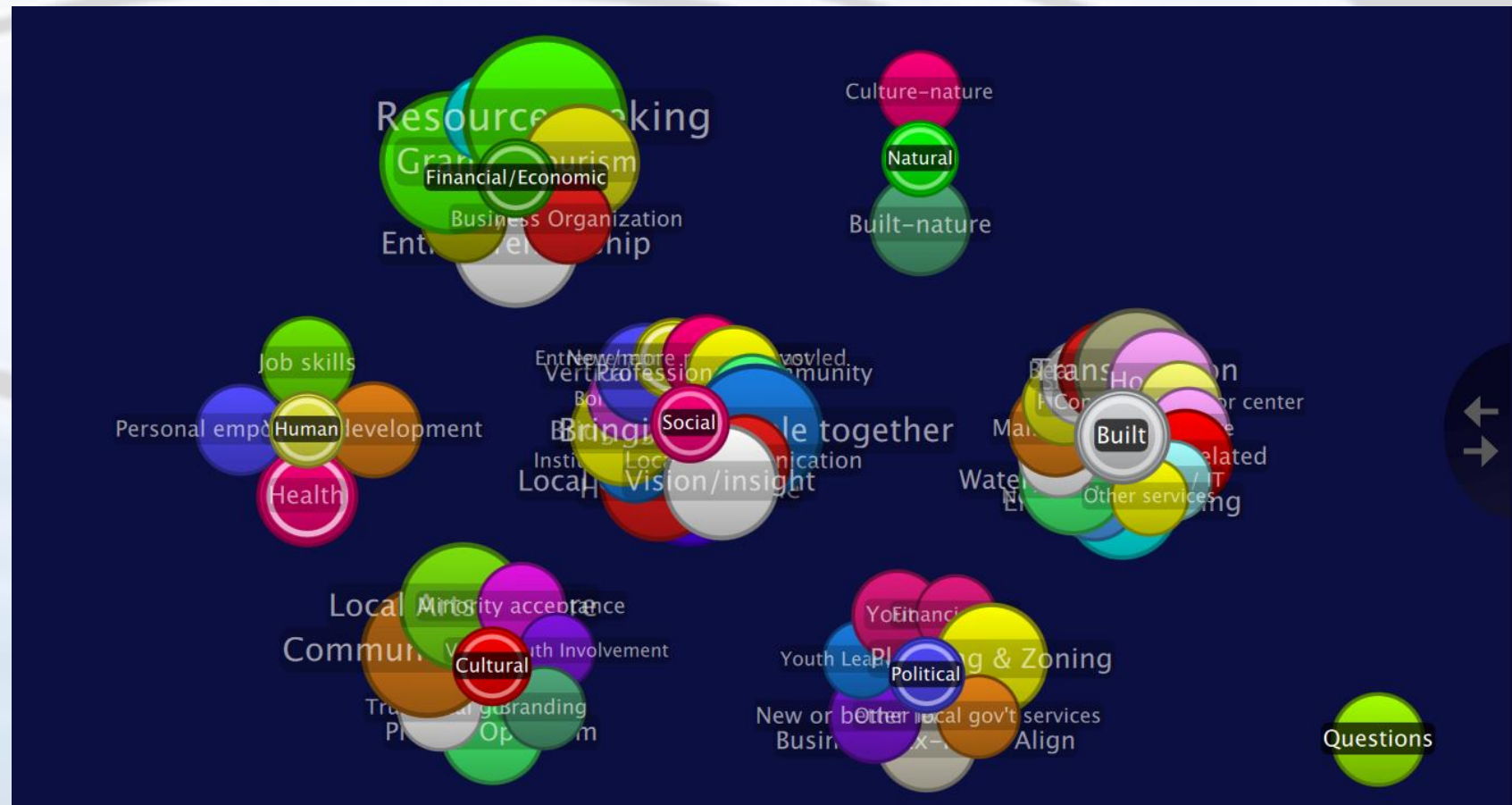
Montana | Idaho | Wyoming



# Stories of change

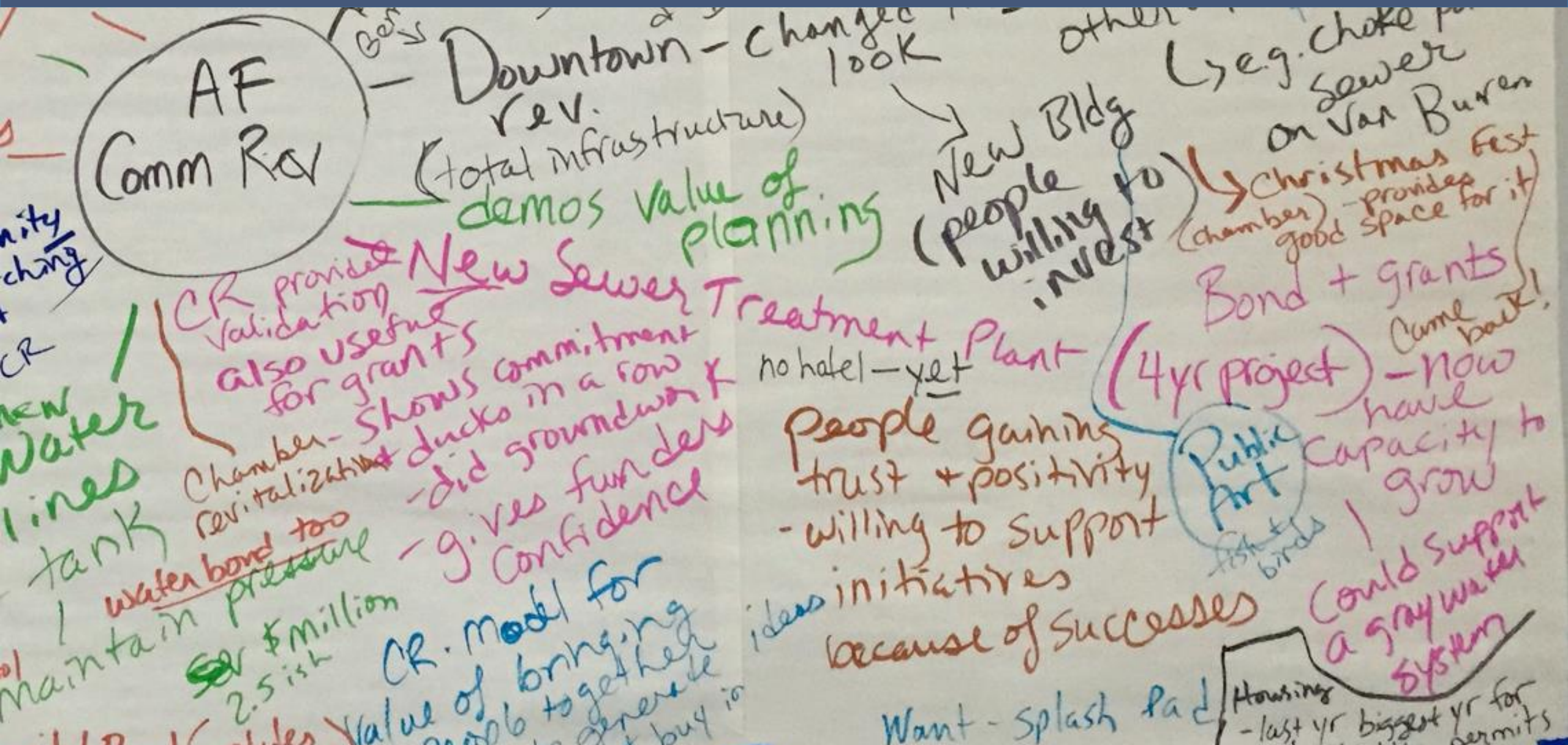
## Ripple Mapping + Survey Data + Observation + Interviews

REMstudio.org

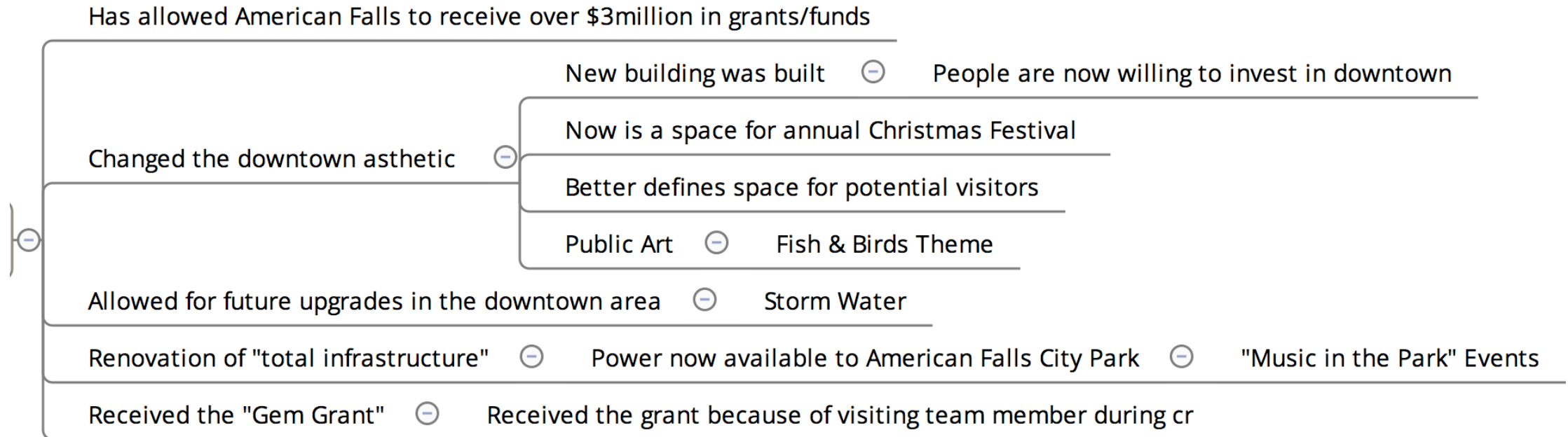




# Ripple Effects Mapping (REM)



# Ripple Effects Mapping



Participants reported the impact of first publicly financed project was so successful it led to more willingness to approve local bonds and levies.



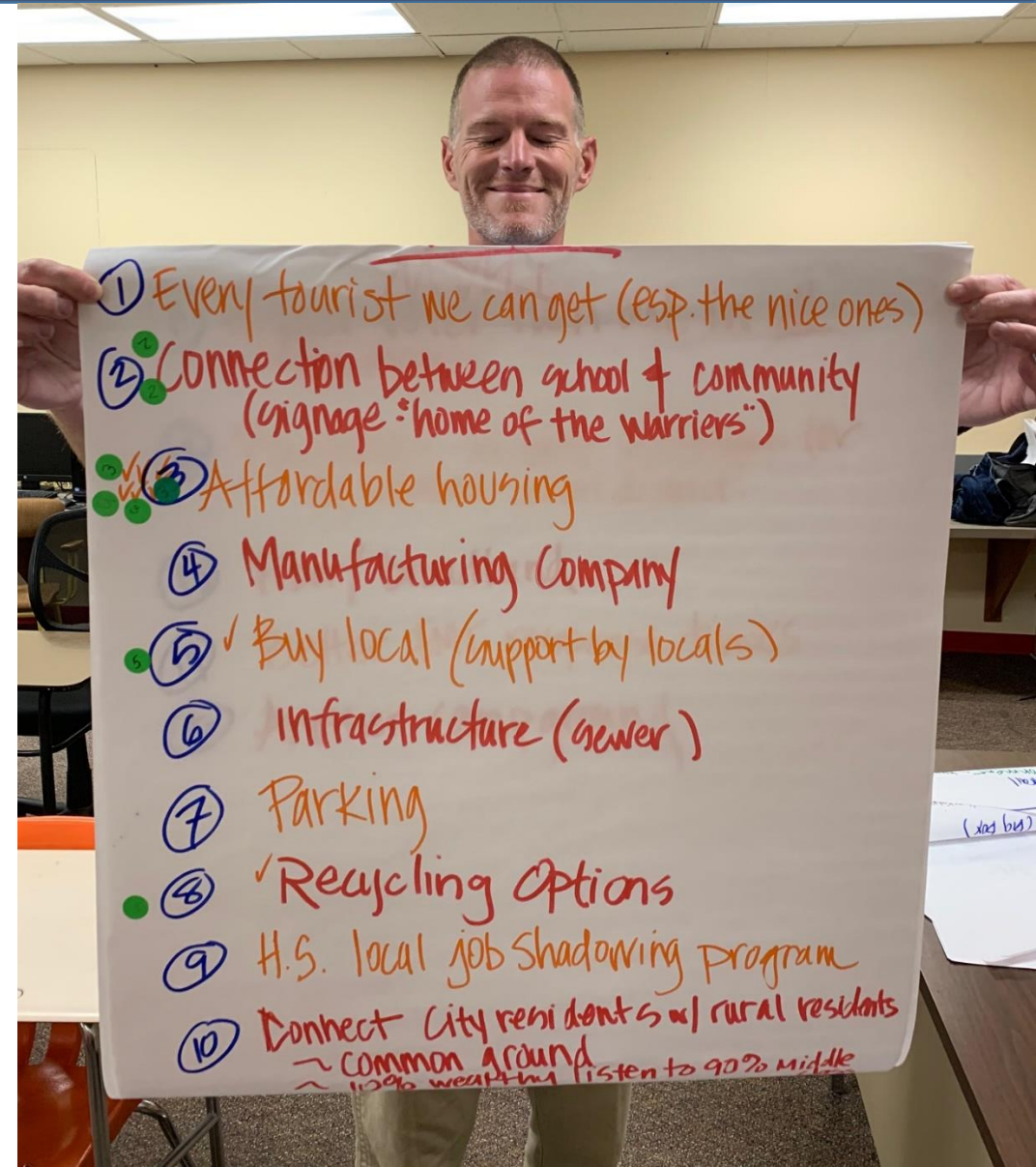
# Current and ongoing

- **Data Analysis | REM Survey | Interviews**
- **Best Practices Guide**
- **First Evaluations of New Process**
- **Writing the next grant**
  - Expand WeCan
  - Add capacity building



# Your turn

- Questions
- Suggestions
- Other working models
- Getting involved





# Partners



The National Institute of  
Food and Agriculture



# Let's connect

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