

REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION

HENDERSON COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

Meeting Date: October 20, 2011

Subject: WNC Livable Communities Initiative

Staff Contact: Anthony W. Starr, AICP, Planning Director

Attachments:

1. WNC Livable Communities Initiative Summary
2. PowerPoint Presentation

SUMMARY OF REQUEST:

The Federal Partnership for Sustainable Communities awarded Land of Sky Regional Council (LOSRC) a major grant to participate in a new planning project for our 5-county region (Buncombe, Haywood, Henderson, Madison, and Transylvania counties). The effort contains a multi-disciplinary approach covering subject areas including: economic prosperity, quality growth, and sustainable development. Specific analysis for the region and each county will include economic issues, housing, transportation, natural & cultural resources, energy & land use.

This initiative intends to avoid duplication of previous planning efforts by building upon existing municipal & county plans such as Henderson County's 2020 Comprehensive Plan. A steering committee consisting of 13 persons, with one person appointed by each county, will guide the results. The Henderson County Board of Commissioners (BOC) approved participation in the process at their meeting on September 6, 2011. The BOC will appoint Henderson County's representative in the coming weeks.

There is no financial obligation for Henderson County to participate in the process. It is expected that participants in this process will gain preferred status for federal grant applications. Henderson County staff anticipates using the detailed research and data from this project, created for each county, to create and update local plans and strategies that enhance our quality of life, e.g. Comprehensive Plan, Strategic Plan, etc. Participation in the process does not obligate any local government to the results of the initiative (WNC Livable Communities Plan).

Linda Giltz, AICP, a senior planner with Land of Sky Regional Council, will present the information and will answer questions of the board.

BOARD ACTION REQUESTED:

The Board is requested to consider the presentation, discuss the project, and ask any questions relating to the effort. The Planning Board will play a significant role in this process.

Suggested Motion: None. No action required.



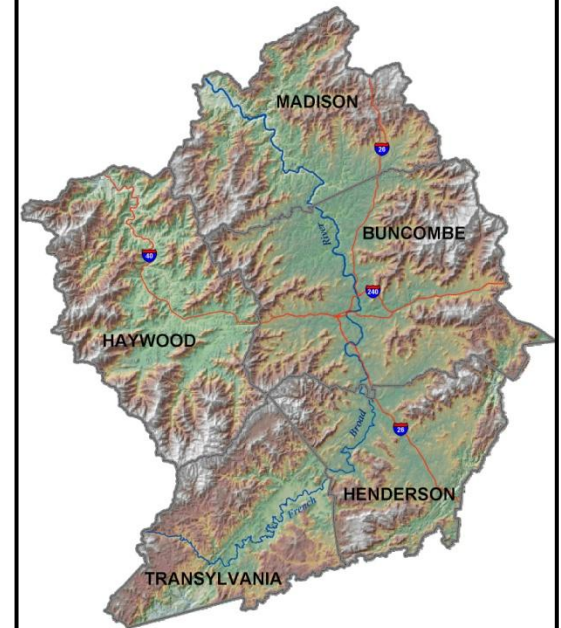
Western North Carolina Livable Communities Initiative

WHAT IT IS: The Initiative is a 3-year project to develop a regional vision for economic prosperity, quality growth, and sustainable development. A consortium of local governments, residents, and organizations in Buncombe, Haywood, Henderson, Transylvania, and Madison Counties will draw on existing plans and strategies to develop a plan to foster economic prosperity through a regional vision that identifies implementable projects and actions. The project will include significant public outreach and involvement. The Initiative is **not about starting from scratch**. It will draw on significant work that has already been accomplished in the region, weaving together existing plans with public involvement. The Initiative is not a central authority over the region's local governments, but is instead a way for the region to identify common goals and objectives that can be attained by working together.

WHY: Citizens and leaders in Western North Carolina have identified "greater regional coordination" related to economic development, quality growth, and sustainability as a primary need for the region. The project will allow local governments, businesses, non-profits, citizens, and others to realize unprecedented regional coordination on jobs, energy, housing, transportation, resources, and other interconnected issues. This will foster more prosperous, livable communities in our region through **new quality jobs, new investment, diverse economic development strategies, energy and financial savings, and carbon emission reductions**.

HOW: During the three-year project, the Consortium will work together to gather public input and weave together existing plans and strategies across topic areas in the **Local Livability Framework** (see below). Their work is funded by a grant from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), through the Sustainable Communities Initiative.

CONTACT: Carrie Runser-Turner – carrie@landofsky.org or 828-251-6622



- Federal Livability Principles**
- More transportation choices
 - Equitable, affordable housing
 - Enhance economic competitiveness
 - Support existing communities
 - Value neighborhoods
 - Coordinate and leverage federal support

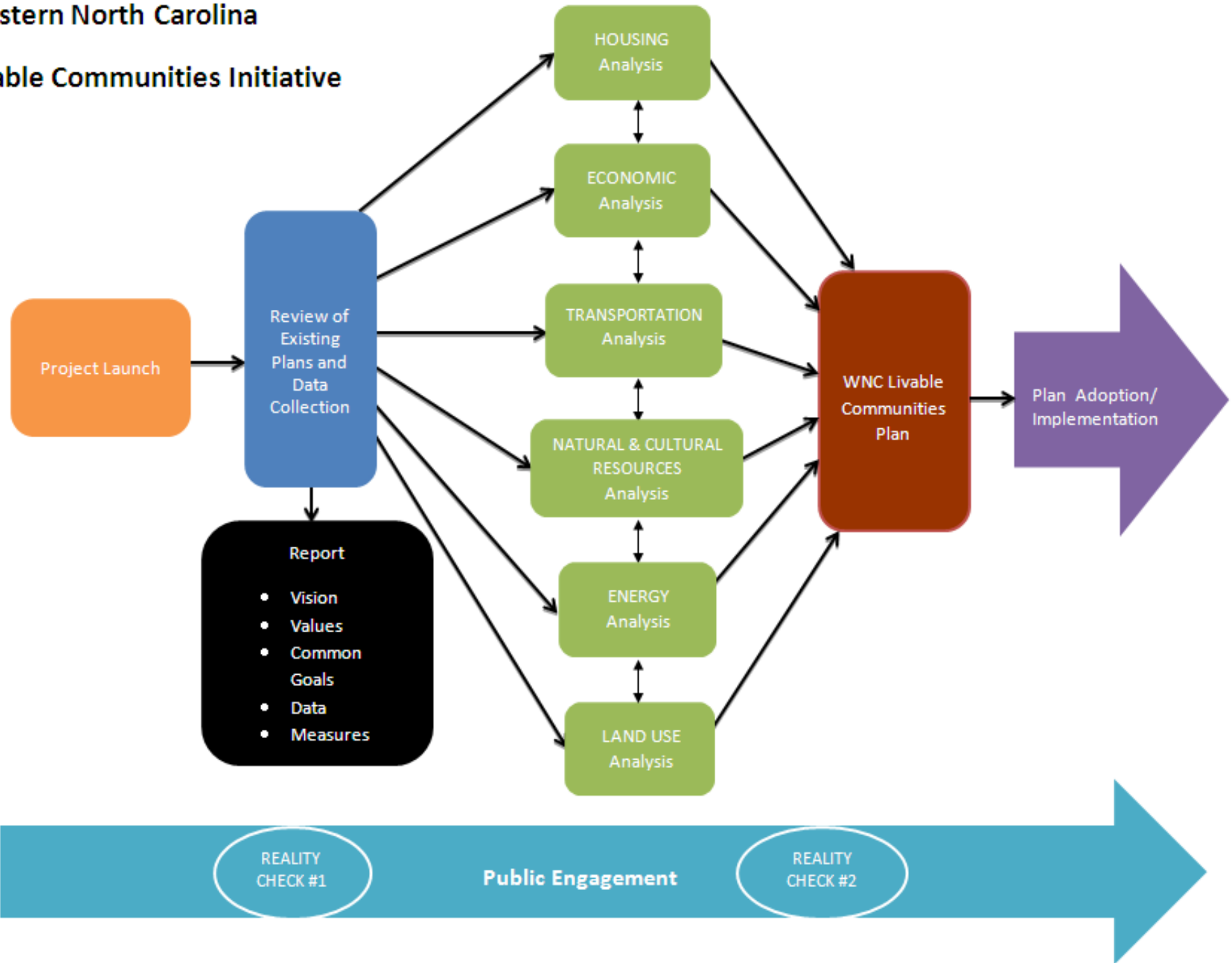


Local Livability Framework



Western North Carolina

Livable Communities Initiative



WNC Livable Communities Initiative



Background

Federal Partnership for Sustainable Communities (June 2009)



Federal Livability Principles

1. Provide more transportation choices
2. Promote equitable, affordable housing
3. Enhance economic competitiveness
4. Support existing communities
5. Value communities and neighborhoods
6. Coordinate and leverage federal support



Organizing Regionally

- Federal agencies initiated conversations with local and regional organizations
- Initial group of partners met and discussed opportunities, needs, possible approaches
- Public event June 9, 2010
 - *Thinking Globally, Assessing Regionally, Acting Locally*
- Lots of
 - Projects
 - Partnerships
 - Collaboration
 - Data
 - Plans
 - Knowledge
 - Passion for communities and sustainability



Grant Opportunity

Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant Program

- \$100 million available nationwide

Regional Grant application

- LOS as Lead Planning Agency
- Grant priorities fit nicely with regional priorities
- Proposed approach:
 - Gather and analyze **existing** plans
 - Create a regional vision for **economic prosperity**
 - Identify and begin implementing projects
- Grant awarded October 2010, start date February 2011



Project Overview

- 3-year project to develop regional vision and strategies for **economic prosperity, quality growth, sustainable development**
- Strategies/projects identified will focus on the subject areas described in the livability framework
- Will draw on **existing plans and strategies** and **extensive public involvement**
- Work will be guided by a **Consortium** of local governments, economic development entities, non-profits, businesses, and other organizations
- Project area is 5-county Western North Carolina region:
 - Buncombe
 - Haywood
 - Henderson
 - Madison
 - Transylvania



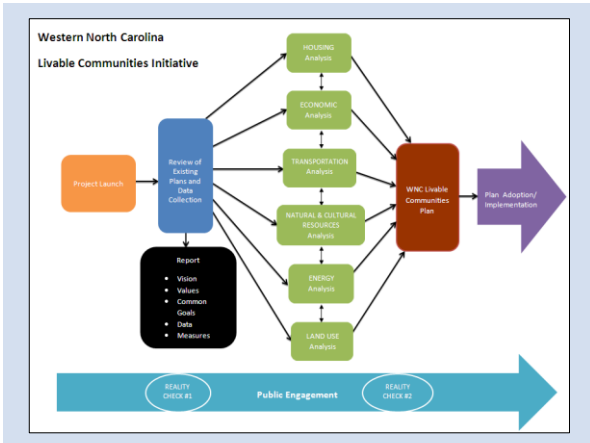
Project Goals

- Create a plan that promotes **economic prosperity**
- Ensure **broad and diverse participation** in the process
- Create a regional/community picture based on **existing plans/data** to share with the public
- Develop future scenarios and alternatives
- Gather **widespread, unprecedented community input** on future scenarios and existing, combined plans/strategies
- Ensure that planning for transportation, housing, jobs, energy, land use, and cultural and natural resources is **integrated**
- Seek **implementation opportunities** throughout the process
- Ensure that the Regional Plan is a **"living document"**



Project Outcomes

- A regional plan that can be a **platform for elevating local strategies and needs to a regional level**
- A coordinated regional vision for economic prosperity, quality growth, and sustainability that **allows the region to achieve more by working together** than can be accomplished separately
- Coordination of needs/planning across various subject areas so that **limited resources can be used more effectively**
- Positions the region well for **future funding opportunities** (through Preferred Sustainability Status or by qualifying for funds contingent upon completion of this process)



Process



ECONOMIC Analysis



HOUSING Analysis

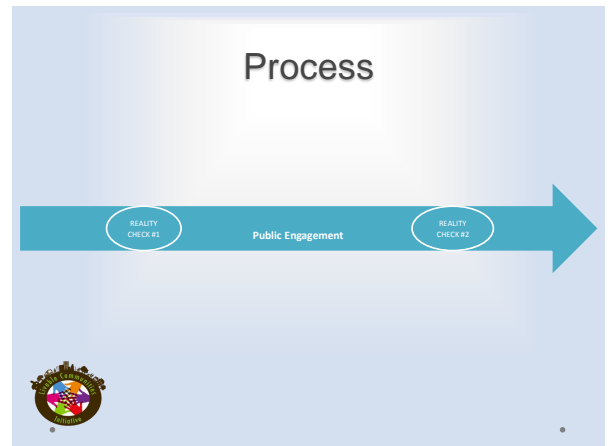
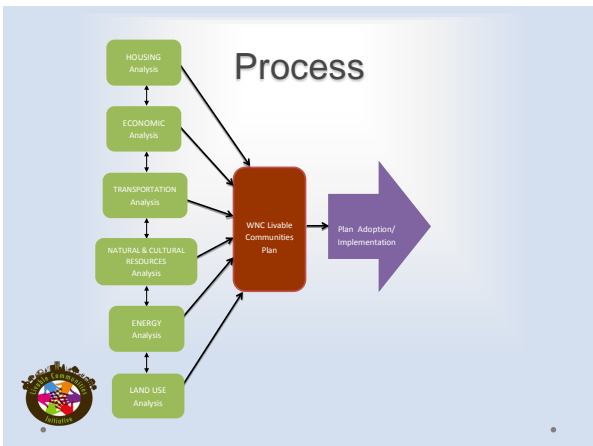


TRANSPORTATION Analysis

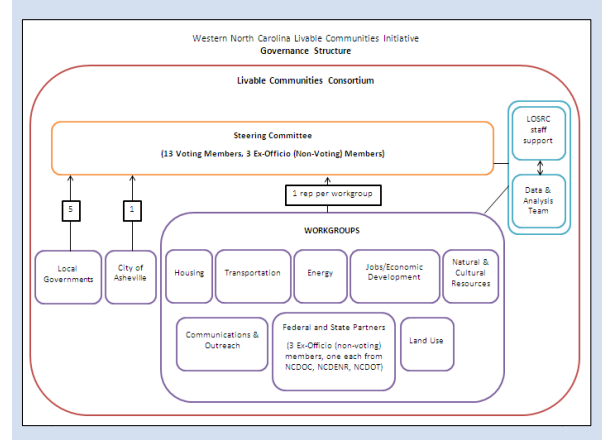
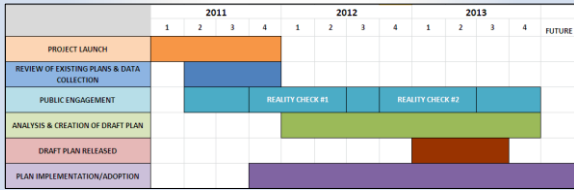
ENERGY Analysis

NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES Analysis

LAND USE Analysis



Estimated Timeline



Current Status

- A Request for Proposals was issued seeking assistance with implementation of the Initiative – responses were due July 15. Interviewed four teams in August and consultant team now under contract.
- Early administrative requirements from HUD have been met
- Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing underway
- RENC1 mapping and data collection underway
- Preferred Sustainability Status
- Organizations, local governments, and others are signing the Consortium Agreement
- Beginning to develop outreach and communication strategy and materials



Requested Board Action

For Henderson County Board of Commissioners

- Participate in the Livable Communities Initiative
- Sign the Consortium Agreement to formalize your participation
- Appoint a Henderson County representative to the Steering Committee (can happen at a future meeting)
- No financial obligation to participate
- No obligation to any participation in future actions or policies that result from the Plan



QUESTIONS?

- Linda Giltz, Senior Planner or Carrie Runser-Turner, Project Manager
- Call 828-251-6622
- Email lindag@landofsky.org
- Visit <http://bit.ly.wnclci>

