

## **The Western North Carolina Livable Community Initiative: Background Information**

Updated May 25, 2010

- In June, 2009, the federal agencies HUD, EPA and DOT entered into the Partnership for Sustainable Communities. Their agreement focused on inter-departmental coordination and collaboration to help achieve sustainable communities. Their guiding values are embodied in six “Livability Principles.”
- In October, 2009, Blue Econ Consulting organized a meeting among representatives from the federal agencies and local governments and non-profit organizations to explore local impacts of federal Sustainable Communities Initiative.
- In February, 2010, the federal agencies returned to Asheville to explain developments in funding availability, and to hear of the region’s progress in creating partnerships for sustainable development. The City of Asheville, Land of Sky Regional Council and the Asheville Design Center hosted the meeting.
- The Land of Sky Regional Council member governments approved “The Western North Carolina Livable Communities Initiative Vision” at the Council meeting on April 28, 2010. In addition to being a commitment towards working together as a region, this LCI Vision establishes a broad outline of principles by which future projects may be deemed “sustainable,” providing an initial screen for local decision-making regarding funding proposals.
- Asheville region partners are presenting a workshop on Sustainable Communities at the May 27 North Carolina Community Development Association spring conference. Representatives from HUD, EPA and DOT will co-present.
- At the request of EPA, the Asheville region partners are organizing a planning workshop on June 9, 2010 to engage local and regional stakeholders and federal reps in sustainability planning.
- The Asheville region’s start-up planning team includes Jim Fox (RENCI), Michael Leahey (HUB), John Creighton and Donna Cottrell (Buncombe County), Joe McKinney and Ron Townley (Land of Sky Regional Council), Chris Joyell (Asheville Design Center), Bob Wagner (Community Foundation of Western North Carolina), Stephanie Monson and Jeff Staudinger (City of Asheville). Membership in the start-up team is envisioned to expand appropriate to and in support of community expansion of the initiative. Stakeholder interest on June 9 will inform the expansion of the planning team.
- The region expects to develop applications for the HUD Sustainable Communities grants programs, in response to program guidelines expected to be published soon.