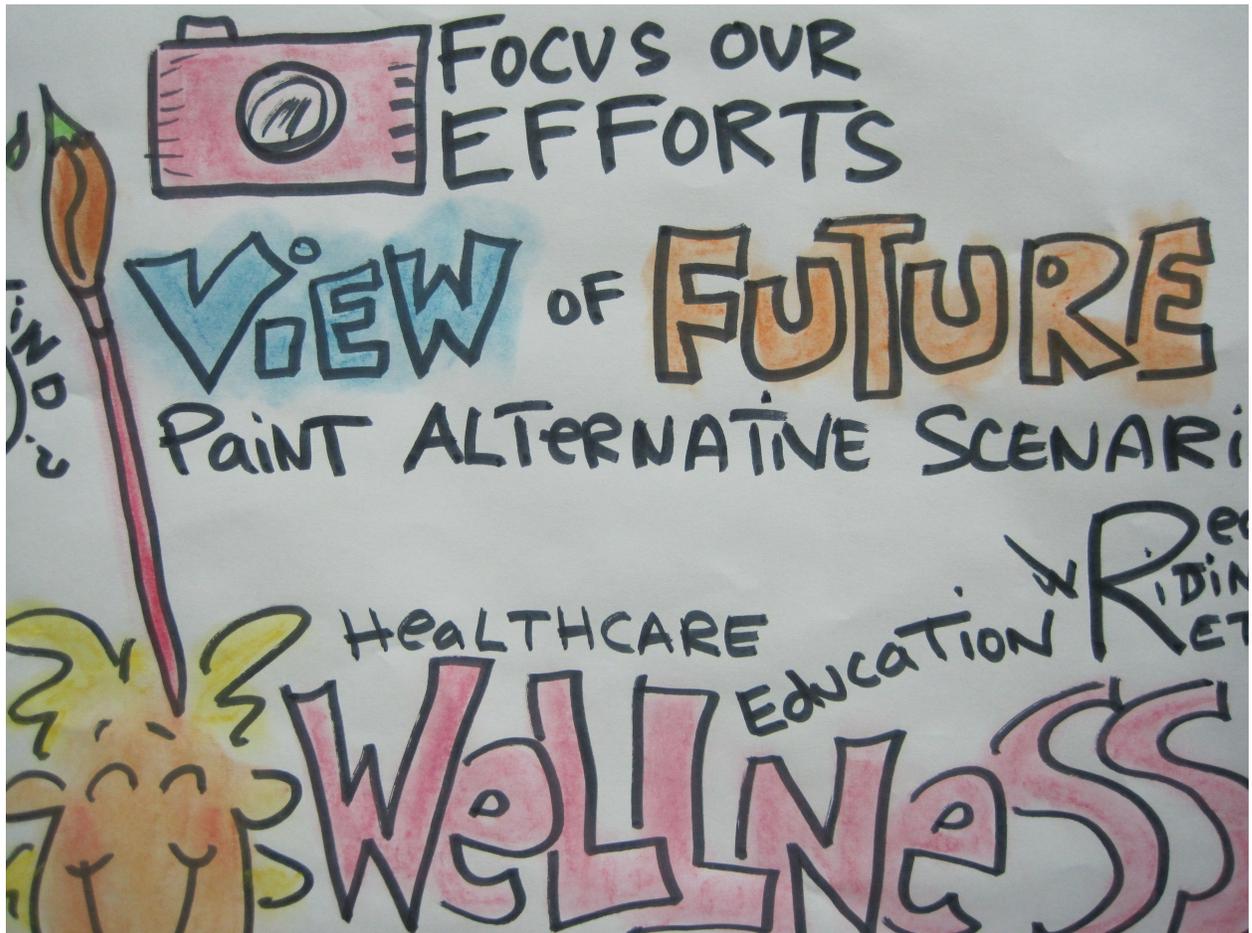


# WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA LIVABLE COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE

Summary Report of June 9, 2010 Public Workshop  
And June 10, 2010 Interagency Meeting



Excerpt from graphic recording/mural created at June 9<sup>th</sup> public meeting by artist Breah Parker

*To further community conversations and support efforts that move the WNC region toward sustainability, the City of Asheville hosted two workshops on June 9 and 10, 2010 under the umbrella of the Western North Carolina Livable Community Initiative.*

For more information go to [www.ashevilenc.gov](http://www.ashevilenc.gov), hover over "Projects and Initiatives" on the left side of the page, and click on "WNC Livable Communities" or contact:

\_City of Asheville Economic Development Office, Stephanie Monson: 828 232 4502

\_City of Asheville Community Development Office, Jeff Staudinger: 828 259 5723

June 9-

## Working Meeting for Public, Non-Profit, and Private Organizations and Individuals at the Local Level

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**Attendee lists and agendas for both meetings can be seen by visiting the website mentioned on the cover page of this document.**

### **Developing the Context**

Participants spent the morning developing the context for the day by working on the concept of regionalism; region specific data was presented by Jim Fox, Renaissance Computing Institute (RENCI) Director, and Ron Townley, Local Government Services Division Director at Land of Sky Regional Council of Governments.

A large group conversation\* – led by facilitator Doc Klein- revolved around the following questions:

- Why Regionalism?
- What Defines Our Region?
- What Does A Successful Region Look Like?

\* Notes from the facilitated discussion are available on the City of Asheville's website (see page 1) under June9WNCLCI\_VerbalComments.pdf and June9WNCLCI\_WrittenComments.pdf

### **Regional Projects as Food for Thought**

After lunch, participants worked on addressing the question “How Are We Going To Work Together Now and In The Future?”

Existing regional projects were presented as food for thought: participants heard short project overviews from leaders and project managers that were interested in take-aways - including the opportunity to become more regional and more sustainable- from today's meeting.

- Asheville Area Regional Riverfront Redevelopment Partnership: Multijurisdictional, public-private collaboration to coordinate sustainability efforts that balance environmental preservation with economic development along the region's riverfront, led by the City of Asheville.
- Buncombe County Landfill as a Multi-purpose Community Asset: Local Government promotes multi purpose, mixed usage of public lands via EPA XL Bioreactor operation, riverfront greenway feasibility study, and regional outdoor recreation amenities including existing Mountain Bike Park.
- Heart of Fletcher, NC: Community building through place building in small-town WNC, by focusing on the development of a town center modeled on Smart Growth principles.
- Eagle Market Streets Partnership: Strengthening a historic African American commercial district that was negatively impacted by urban renewal through community collaborations, green job training, entrepreneurship education, historic preservation, and new construction of mixed income housing.
- Davidson River Village — Planning and development for a 540 acre Brownfield site at the confluence of the French Broad and Davidson Rivers- and adjacent to an area known as “the cradle of forestry”- will show how adaptive reuse of a contaminated site can provide outside the box regional benefits.

- Reading Riding and Retrofit focuses energy efficiency retrofits in regional schools, using projects to educate students and their communities about local foods, health and wellness, benefits of reducing vehicle miles traveled and carbon emissions.
- Clean Energy in Madison County: Schools, private citizens and government partner with the eight-county Mountain Valleys Resource Conservation & Development organization on the Wind Energy for Schools Demonstration Project

### **Areas of Common Interest**

After the presentations facilitator Doc Klein- using comments from the earlier session- led the participant's development of five (common) areas of interest regarding actions needed to develop a sustainable Western North Carolina region.

- **IDENTIFYING LINKS**  
Networks-synergies-existing resources-eliminating duplication of efforts
- **INCREASING PARTICIPATION**  
Inclusion-social equity-identification of informal leaders- aging population-youth participation
- **TARGETING AREAS**  
Identification of projects by demography or geography-I.26-River-Eagle.Market.Streets- Livingston Street-low wealth areas
- **URBAN RURAL CONNECTIONS**  
Housing.jobs mismatch- bringing nature into urbanity- infrastructure support-alternative transportation- greenspace- appropriate workforce development
- **EDUCATION AND PLANNING**  
Sustainability plan-permaculture principles-peak oil and other realities-educating.outreach-innovation

### **END OF DAY/BREAKOUT**

Participants were asked to finish up their day's work by breaking up into groups that loosely correlated with the above "Areas of Interest", and ask themselves:

- Is this area a framework, vision, or driver?
- What is already going on in that area of interest?
- What contributions can I make going forward?
- What next steps or actions are needed (including who should be there)?

And then report back to the larger group\*

Participants used this report back to come up with a theme for any next steps developed by the resulting relationships built here today:

**Collaboration feeds into strategies and contributions feeds into impact  
= LIVABLE HEALTHY RESILIENT COMMUNITIES**

\* Notes from the report back are available on the City of Asheville's website (see page 1) under June9WNCLCI\_BreakOutNotes.pdf

## June 10- Working Meeting for Federal State and Local Officials

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**Attendee lists and agendas for both meetings can be seen by visiting the website mentioned on the cover page of this document.**

- Full minutes from the worksession/meeting can be found under *June10WNCLCminutes.pdf* at the website mentioned on the cover page of this document.
- Linda Giltz, AICP Planner with Land of Sky Regional Council of Governments facilitated this worksession, designed to explore how federal, state, and local agencies will work with each other on Western North Carolina (WNC) regionalism, using the Asheville area as a case study.

### **Setting the Context and Desired Outcomes**

Giltz led officials on a discussion outlining observations from the previous day's public meeting. Themes developed from observations included: assets, needs/challenges, and knowing where to start. Officials produced a short list of common observations about WNC's efforts on regional sustainability:

- Involve and address the needs of low-income residents and neighborhoods
- Environmental issues underlying or are a part of all projects
- Five livability issues/principles – Jobs, Resources, Energy, Transport, Housing - need to be connected
  - Add Health to livability principles
- Need to clarify regional vision and related benefits, and show how projects fit into vision
- We (officials, and community) are poised to take action
- Important to have data-based decision making

### *Desired Outcomes for Today's meeting (from the group):*

- A plan of action – working groups and a timetable; identify people here to work on urban-rural connections
- Identification of potential funding and technical/other resources
- Understanding of how projects and their outcomes fit into a regional vision/plan (note: LOSRC adopted an initial general vision for WNC Livable Communities)
- Identification of what is working and not working (locally, local-federal-state)
- Understanding of specific things needed from federal agencies and others (i.e., "Make it easy for people to help")
- Clear guidance on federal collaboration goals and results desired -  
How can federal agencies help local efforts?  
How will the grant and assistance processes work?
- After today's meeting – Figure out how we will work together:  
How will we support the plan?  
Need to develop/agree on a decision-making model and our time commitments.  
Develop a clearinghouse/list of regional needs  
Focus on collaboration, not competition

### **How will we work together- step 1**

Giltz led a group discussion intended to explore how local officials can better interact with federal and state officials on regional, sustainable projects, including discussion of probable guidelines and goals of any grant funding opportunities through the federal

Sustainable Communities Initiative.

### **How will we work together- step 2**

Locals presented a case study- Implementing the Wilma Dykeman RiverWay Plan- for state and federal officials to use as an exploration of how inter-agency collaboration on an initiative might work. State and federal officials noted that for this and any project in the region, they want/need to see the following:

- How does the individual project fit into the big picture; frame it into regional vision and values
- Budget broken down to project level and also shown cumulatively
- Transportation projects need to be multi-modal
- “Purpose and Need” statements – should include broad set of needs (cross-sector)
- Opportunities to leverage funds from other federal, state and local agencies

### **How will we work together- step 3-**

#### **Next Steps**

- Follow-up meeting of local organizational group (local attendees today) to develop a plan of action
  - Update September, 2010: Start up group has met a dozen times since June 9/10 to address short term plan of action, especially to provide guidance on two grant applications, a Land Of Sky Regional Sustainability plan, and a predevelopment assessment and planning (Community Challenge Planning Grant) for the City Asheville’s East of the RiverWay program. Team meets October 2010 to develop long range plan of action.
- Complete the community mapping/data project
  - Update September, 2010: HUB (Michael Leahy, Robin Cape) Project leaders almost finished with consolidation of regional plans and organization of existing data; RENCI remains major regional headquarters of community mapping and data visualization.
- Determine roles in the partnership (e.g., what will RENCI due to support this initiative?)
  - Loosely determined under grant application; structure with or without grant success TBD at long range planning meeting October 2010
- Land-of-Sky Regional Council of Governments will collaborate with regional nonprofits and the private sector to identify other projects and partners to include under the regional collaboration
- Outreach – provide a summary of this meeting, interested participants, and a formal structure for getting information and getting involved
  - Update: Several of the start up teams has WNC LCI information on their website; formal structure for initiative not determined enough to have one point of dissemination. Goal is networked points of information and beginnings of formal structure January 2011.

Artist Breah Parker's graphic recording/mural that now hangs in Asheville City Hall



The event could not have happened without the hard work/donated time of all the participants listed on the attendee list, in addition a major **Thank You!** goes to:

Janet Dack, City of Asheville for logistics

Roots Catering - W. Haywood Street in the River Arts District - for a healthy and delicious lunch for folks from out of town

Seven Star Factory for their beautiful event space on Lyman Street in the River Arts District

Breah Livolsi Parker of BlipStudio for illustrating the community's desires (graphic recording) the first day

Doc Klein of Uncharted Territories, Inc for facilitating the first day

Linda Giltz of Land of Sky COG for facilitating the second day