

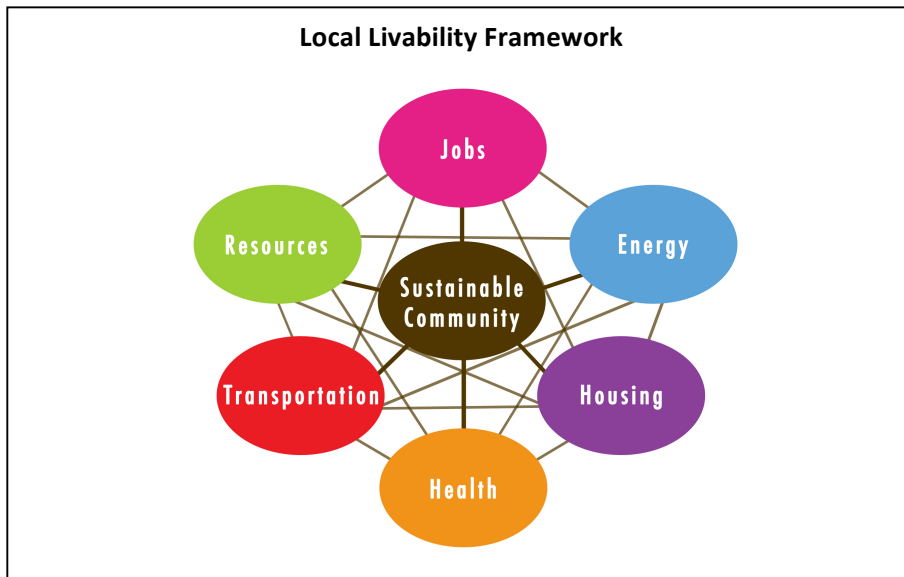
Workplan Narrative

GroWNC (formerly Western North Carolina Livable Communities Initiative) is a 3-year project to develop a regional vision for economic prosperity, quality growth, and sustainable development. A consortium of local governments, organizations, and residents in Buncombe, Haywood, Henderson, Transylvania, and Madison Counties will 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.

Citizens and leaders in Western North Carolina have identified “greater regional coordination” related to growth management 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.**

Throughout the Plan development process (outlined below), priority has been placed on inclusion of traditionally under-represented communities, which will serve to enhance both the process and the projects and strategies identified in the Plan.

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.**



The Local Livability Framework is based upon the following principles, which are aligned with the principles of the Federal Partnership for Sustainable Communities:

- **Provide more transportation choices.** Our Local Livability Principle for transportation is to develop and expand the region’s clean, efficient and affordable transportation choices.
- **Promote equitable, affordable housing.**
- **Enhance economic competitiveness.** Our Local Livability Principle includes expanding sustainable and diverse employment options that pay a “living wage”
- **Support existing communities.**
- **Coordinate and leverage federal policies and investment. Value communities and neighborhoods.**
- *Preserve our natural and cultural resources (Local Livability Principle).*
- *Expand and utilize more local, renewable energy sources (Local Livability Principle).*

Process to Develop a Regional Plan

We have developed a seven stage process to develop our Regional Plan. Each stage includes several activities. Major Activities (some of which extend into multiple stages) are listed below. The process to Develop the Regional Plan is detailed in the sections below and listed here as a reference:

Stage 1 – Project Start-Up

Activity 1: Governance and Partnerships

Stage 2 – Preparing Data and Outreach

Activity 2: Collect and Evaluate Plans and Data

Activity 3: Public Engagement

Stage 3 – Public Engagement Events, Phase 1: Reality Check #1

Stage 4 – Create Draft Plan and Alternatives

Activity 4: Job Creation

Activity 5: Improve transportation and housing options by integrating planning for transportation, housing, employment, land use

Activity 6: Identify potential infill and brownfields sites

Stage 5 – Public Engagement Events, Phase 2: Reality Check #2

Stage 6 – Refine & Release

Stage 7 – Implement Regional Plan

Activity 7: Identify proposed revisions to Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), and Regional Consolidated Strategic Housing and Community Development Plan

Stage 1 – Project Start-Up:

Timeline: Quarter 1 (February 1, 2011) through Quarter 12 (December 31, 2013)

Description: An Interim Leadership Team will guide the initial stages of the project, including development and implementation of a Governance Structure. Staff will complete development of documents required by HUD and begin initial public outreach activities. The Interim Leadership Team will assist with opening the Consortium to additional citizens, government bodies, private sector interests and other stakeholders and involving these entities in the Governance Structure. Consortium

Memorandums of Understanding (MOU's) will be signed as required by HUD within 120 days of the award of funds. Requests for Proposals (RFPs) to solicit consultants will be created and released. This stage includes Activity 1: Governance and Partnerships, elements of which will continue throughout the project.

Goal: To ensure broad and diverse participation in the project through the Consortium and its Governance Structure, through effective public communication, and through working relationships with partners and consultants that are effective and successful

Objectives:

- Complete required HUD workplan documentation
- Begin public involvement efforts
- Develop and release Requests for Proposals to secure consultant services for various tasks in the project
- Develop and begin to implement a long-term Governance Structure for the project and Consortium
- Open Consortium to broad-based membership

Major Activities (with responsible party in red text)

- **Develop Governance Structure.** Work with Interim Leadership Team to develop Consortium Governance Structure, including guidelines for voting structure and participation from a broad range of constituents. Guidelines will include descriptions of several Working Groups that will convene around specific subject areas. Governance Structure will be designed to ensure diverse participation from traditionally under-represented communities. **Land-of-Sky staff, Interim Leadership Team**
- **Form Federal-State LCI Team.** Identify state and federal partners; form Federal-State LCI team; Convene team and compare issues, priorities and strategies. **Land-of-Sky staff**
- **Incorporate state and federal sustainability policies and resources into Regional Plan.** Identify state and federal priorities and funding sources for regional sustainability projects; Incorporate state and federal sustainability policies and resources into regional plan. **Federal/State LCI Workgroup, consultant(s)**
- **Incorporate regional priorities and strategies in state policies and strategies.** Identify regional priorities. **Federal/State LCI Workgroup**
- **Develop partnerships between affordable housing developers and transportation system coordinators and major employment providers.** Convene cross-sector subgroup of Housing Workgroup, Jobs/Economic Development Workgroup, and potentially impacted neighborhoods to discuss opportunities and challenges; subgroup develops scenarios and secures broader community feedback; subgroup refines alternatives based on community feedback and maps priorities. **Land-of-Sky staff, Housing Workgroup, Jobs/ED Workgroup, Cross-Sector Subgroup**
- **Secure participation of transit providers, MPO, RPO, ARHC, Chamber of Commerce, AdvantageWest, and Mountain BizWorks.** Convene sector-specific Workgroups related to Housing, Transportation and Jobs/Economic Development (including key employers) to discuss opportunities and challenges; Ensure that working groups cross-communicate on specific issues (via Subgroups); Workgroups review options to identify and prioritize short- and long-term

achievable initiatives -- Secure broader community feedback; Secure long-term commitment from working group to develop collaborative partnerships. **Land-of-Sky Staff, Workgroups**

- **Develop partnerships for job creation.** Convene Cross-Sector Subgroup, including K-12 schools, community colleges, Asheville GO!, employers and economic developers; subgroup meets regularly and develops strategies for job creation. **Land-of-Sky Staff, Workgroups**

Products/Outcomes:

- Completed HUD documents, including workplan documentation, Consortium Agreements, MOUs, etc.
 - Governance Structure document
 - Diverse regional consortium with active and engaged Working Groups and cross-sector subgroups, including (but not limited to):
 - Federal-State LCI team
 - Cross-sector Subgroup re: Housing, Jobs/Economic Development, and potentially impacted neighborhoods
 - Work Groups including transit providers, MPO, RPO, ARHC, Chambers of Commerce, AdvantageWest, and Mountain BizWorks.
 - Job Creation subgroup
 - Summary of Federal and state priorities and funding opportunities, including application requirements and timeframes; LOS and other organizations pursuing some of the state and/or federal funding opportunities.
 - Regional priorities and strategies identified and communicated to state and federal partners
- Long Term Outcome:
- Aligned federal planning and investment resources that mirror the local and regional strategies for achieving sustainable communities

Stage 2 – Preparing Data and Outreach:

Timeline: Quarter 2 (April 1, 2011) through Quarter 12 (December 31, 2013)

Description: Building on Stage 1, consultants will be selected, detailed outreach strategies will be refined, and in depth discussions will continue with the Consortium on likely future development scenarios. During this Stage, known regional data gaps and scenario planning baseline measurement work begins. The region’s many local and regional plans and strategies will be gathered, inventoried, and assessed. Consultants will integrate a broad base of community involvement and scenario planning with evaluation and assessment of existing plans, creating a regional/community picture that includes mapping of various elements throughout the region. The resulting deliverables will be woven together to strengthen the existing policy framework while providing adaptability for future development scenarios through established benchmarks and indicators. The first steps of our formal and ongoing Public Engagement will occur during this Stage, which will include development of a detailed outreach strategy, seeking active participation from a broad cross-section of the region, and development of a variety of communication tools to address barriers and issues. This Stage includes the following Activities:

- Activity 2: Collect and Evaluate Plans and Data (Quarter 2 through Quarter 4)

- Activity 3: Public Engagement (beginning in Quarter 2, ongoing throughout project)

Goal: To create a regional/community picture based on existing Plans and Data, as well as future scenarios and alternatives, that can be shared with the public through a variety of public engagement efforts. To develop a detailed outreach strategy to ensure widespread involvement.

Objectives:

- Select consultant(s) and enter into contracts for work to begin
- Collect and evaluate existing local, regional and state plans
- Prepare a regional/community picture and future development scenarios for consideration by the public
- Develop and deploy a detailed public outreach strategy and associated communications tools

Major Activities (with responsible party in red text)

- **Collect and evaluate local, regional and state plans.** Develop a framework for evaluating plans and collect all existing, relevant plans. Evaluate plans based on evaluation framework and report results; include identification of gaps, commonalities and alignment with federal and regional livability principles. **Consultant(s) (with staff support)**
- **Prepare regional/community picture that includes mapping of housing, employment centers, and transportation network.** **RENCI, Consultant(s), Land-of-Sky staff**
- **Design future scenarios and develop plans for widespread public involvement.** Collect Haywood County and other data as determined; Begin designing future development scenarios based on known trends and a varying set of values. Get public feedback on the future scenarios through a full range of venues and means. Develop a set of alternatives based on feedback. **RENCI, Data/Analysis Workgroup, Consultant(s)**
- **Develop a draft regional plan for sustainability that identifies implementable projects and strategies.** Draft an outline and format for plan and strategies. Complete draft plan; Communicate draft plan contents to public in a variety of ways. Get public feedback on the plan, selected future alternatives and implementation strategies through a full range of venues and means. **Consultant(s) (with staff support)**
- **Design detailed outreach strategy.** Work with consultant and Consortium to develop detailed public engagement process and initial communications tools. **Interim Leadership Team, Consultant(s) (with staff support), Consortium**
- **Seek active participation from members of targeted communities.** Identify target communities (e.g. older adults, Hispanics, African-American, Native American, low income, rural, persons with disabilities, etc.); Begin outreach and engagement process with previously marginalized populations within the five-county planning area; Draft planning document reflects interests from all the diverse communities throughout the region. **Consultant(s), Land-of-Sky staff, Consortium**
- **Identify communication barriers/issues.** Work with members of target communities to identify communication barriers and issues; Use communications toolbox to address barriers and issues. **Consultant(s), Land-of-Sky staff, Consortium**
- **Develop communication toolbox to include multi-lingual and multi-media resources.** Convene Communication and Outreach Workgroup to develop communications toolbox; Draft

communication toolbox shared with representatives of target communities to ensure usefulness; Draft plan disseminated through multiple communication vehicles, including traditional and new methods. **Consultant(s), Land-of-Sky staff, Communications and Outreach Workgroup**

Products/Outcomes:

- Catalogue of existing plans with evaluation summary; public involvement on plan summary results.
- Complete regional data set depicting housing, employment centers, transportation network, population, land use/land cover, natural features, and energy.
- Updated data sets for entire region; scenarios and visualization tools
- Regional Plan for Sustainable Development
- Detailed outreach strategy
- Identified leaders within the targeted communities to improve outreach and communication; Active participation in the planning process by members of previously marginalized communities; Continued feedback on the draft planning document from all the diverse communities.
- Communication barriers and issues identified and addressed through communication toolbox.
- Communication toolbox

Long Term Outcome:

- Creation of regional transportation, housing, water, energy and air quality plans that are deeply aligned and tied to local comprehensive land use and capital investment plans.

Stage 3 – Public Engagement Events, Phase 1: Reality Check #1:

Timeline: Quarter 4 (October 1, 2011) through Quarter 6 (June 30, 2013)

Description: This stage of the project is designed to provide a grounding “check-in” through widespread community feedback and dialogue that will allow consortium partners to better understand the ability (or inability) of existing plans to meet communities’ current and future needs. With the most extensive array of background information ever assembled for this region, the consortium and its partners will initiate large-scale community outreach through a series of coordinated input tools and formats targeted and customized to the region’s communities, including community outreach teams charged with eliciting an unprecedented level of public participation from a fully representative audience. Communities will learn, discuss and provide input on what these plans and strategies currently mean for their communities and how they fit (or do not fit) with their needs now and for the future. This will include additional scenario planning and “reality check” exercises and will build upon Stage 2 outcomes.

Goal: To gather widespread, unprecedented community input on scenario planning models and existing, combined plans and strategies

Objectives:

- Conduct first Reality Check event

- Launch virtual input tools
- Identify regional values and measures

Major Activities (with responsible party in red text)

- **Public Engagement Events, Phase 1: Reality Check #1.** Launch and maintain virtual input tools. Share scenario planning models with community. Conduct widespread public involvement and gather feedback. Identify regional values and measures. **Consultant(s), RENCI, Consortium**

Products/Outcomes:

- Reality Check #1

Long Term Outcome:

- Increased participation and decision-making in developing and implementing a long range vision for the region by populations traditionally marginalized in public planning processes.

Stage 4 – Create Draft Plan and Alternatives :

Timeline: Quarter 5 (January 1, 2012) through Quarter 12 (December 31, 2013)

Description: Consortium and consultants will continue to seek and receive additional input in Stage 4 as they continue weaving and refining the community and regional inputs into the draft regional plan and alternatives. This will include refined benchmarks, indicators, and scenario models to allow for continued revision and adaptation to ever-changing regional conditions. This stage includes significant analysis and cross-sector collaboration amongst workgroups in job creation, transportation, housing, and brownfields. This stage includes:

Activity 4: Job Creation (Quarter 5 through Quarter 8)

Activity 5: Improve transportation and housing options by integrating planning for transportation, housing, employment, and land use (Quarter 5 through Quarter 12)

Activity 6: Identify potential infill and brownfields sites (Quarter 5 – Quarter 8)

Goal: To ensure that significant public input and existing plans and strategies are woven together into a draft plan and alternatives for further refinement. To ensure that planning for transportation, housing, jobs, energy, land use, and resources is integrated.

Objectives:

- Develop strategies to improve employment and to integrate housing, transportation, employment, and land use planning
- Increase the availability of transportation options
- Increase the availability of affordable housing
- Increase infill development
- Develop a draft plan and alternatives based on analysis, existing plans/strategies, and public input

Major Activities (with responsible party in red text)

- **Develop strategies for job creation.** Develop strategies to create effective job training programs that are matched to employment needs. Develop strategies to improve graduation rates and employability of local high school graduates. Continue implementing strategies, monitor and modify program progress as needed. **Jobs/Economic Development Workgroup**
- **Analyze locations of housing and employment centers in relation to the transportation network.** Review maps of housing and employment centers and compare with transportation system and identify gaps and opportunities. Analyze gaps in network and propose improvements. Prioritize improvements. **MPO staff, RENCI, Consortium/public, Consultant(S) (review)**
- **Develop multi-modal transportation options in proximity to major employers.** Identify multi-modal transportation option near major employment centers. Develop alternatives linking transportation options and employment centers. Review options based on community and agency feedback -- Incorporate recommendation into planning strategies. **MPO staff, Transportation Workgroup, RENCI, Consortium/public**
- **Identify affordable housing initiatives that interconnect with multi-modal transportation and major employers.** Secure input and options from affordable housing providers, Transportation planners and employers. Analyze siting challenges and opportunities --- Develop mapping models and secure community input. Coordinate collaborative relationship between housing providers, transportation, economic development partners and major employers. **Land-of-Sky staff, Cross-Sector Subgroup**
- **Expand multi-model transportation and employment options to rural communities.** Develop a database to identify existing and potential transportation and employment options within rural communities. Work with transportation, planning and economic development staff to review entrepreneurial and employment opportunities. Initiate a subgroup of transportation and economic development planners that support rural communities within the region. **MPO and RPO Staff, Cross-sector Subgroup (Transportation and ED)**
- **Increase alternative fuel vehicles and stations.** Identify gaps in locations of alternative fuel and electric vehicle charging stations in region. Work with fleet managers and fuel providers to secure grants for new fueling and electric vehicle charging stations to fill gaps and to increase the number of alternative fuel vehicles in fleets. Work to continue increasing the number of alt. fuel vehicles and stations throughout the region. **Land-of-Sky Clean Cities staff, Clean Cities Committees, RENCI or Land-of-Sky GIS staff (mapping)**
- **Improve affordable housing opportunities.** Complete Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice. Promote implementation of recommendations identified in the Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice. Identify affordable housing opportunities and developers. Identify potential sites for business development close to affordable housing and in rural areas. **Consultant, Land-of-Sky staff, Asheville Housing Consortium**
- **Decrease in per capita VMT and transportation-related emissions.** Work with Clean Air Campaign, Clean Vehicles Coalition, MPO, RPO, bicycle and pedestrian groups, and area transit operators to identify gaps and opportunities. Use gaps identified in network to develop strategies and pursue funding for projects to improve transportation choices. Incorporate the identified strategies and implementation plans into the regional plan. **Transportation Workgroup, MPO/RPO staff, Land-of-Sky staff**

- **Identify infill sites for sustainable, affordable and accessible housing development along transit corridors which connect to employment centers.** Identify developable infill sites that are within proximity to employment centers and accessible to transit systems. **Land-of-Sky staff, Regional Brownfields Initiative, Jobs/Economic Development Workgroup, Transportation Workgroup**
- **Develop partnerships between affordable housing developers and transportation system coordinators and major employment providers.** Convene Cross-sector subgroups of housing providers, economic development representatives and potentially impacted neighborhoods to discuss opportunities and challenges. Subgroup develops scenarios and secures broader community feedback. Subgroup refines alternatives based on community feedback and maps priorities. **Cross-sector Subgroup (Housing, ED, neighborhoods)**

Products/Outcomes:

- Job creation strategies identified, including job training programs and strategies to improve graduation rates.
- Transit, bicycle and pedestrian improvements identified and prioritized to strengthen networks and ties to housing and employment
- Complete baseline analysis of existing and promote discussion groups between major employers and transportation team; Alternatives are developed and mapped for individual communities; With community feedback, alternatives are refined and prioritized
- Convene Cross-Sector Subgroup of housing providers, transportation planners, economic development staff and major employers; Strategies and opportunities are refined based on community and working group input
- Complete an assessment of existing transportation and employment links in rural communities within the region; Scenario models are developed based on initial assessments and complement community scale; Alternatives refined and incorporated into planning strategies.
- Gaps in locations of alternative fuel and electric vehicle charging stations in region identified; US Dept of Energy Clean Cities Designation; Assistance provided to fleet managers and fuel providers to secure grants for new fueling and electric vehicle charging stations to fill gaps and to increase the number of alternative fuel vehicles in fleets; Identified strategies and implementation plans incorporated into the regional plan.
- Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice; Affordable housing opportunities and developers identified; Potential sites for business development close to affordable housing and in rural areas identified; Funding opportunities to support affordable housing development and economic development initiatives identified.
- Historic and current VMT and emissions data collected and plotted. Work with Clean Vehicles Coalition, Clean Air Campaign, MPO, and RPO to further air quality outreach and education. Work with area transit operators, bicycle and pedestrian groups, and existing TDM program to support efforts to reduce VMT. Identify funding opportunities. Continue working with partners to support air quality outreach and VMT reductions. Measure any changes in air quality and VMT trends during project timeframe. Funding opportunities pursued.
- Developable sites identifies and mapped; Mapping refined and community input presentations finalized; Planning strategies are refined based on community feedback

- Coordinate housing provider, transportation, employers and community representative subgroup; Utilizing subgroup recommendations develop achievable opportunities and outcomes -- secure community feedback; Subgroup refines recommendations and provides alternatives for CEDS and other long-range planning reports

Long Term Outcomes:

- Develop strategies for creating job opportunities for residents in disadvantaged communities through partnerships with schools, job training programs and major employers.
- Reduced social and economic disparities for low-income, minority communities, and other disadvantaged populations within the target region.
- Decrease in per capita VMT and transportation-related emissions for the region.
- Decrease in combined housing and transportation costs per household.
- Increased proportion of low and very-low income households within a 30-minute transit commute of major employment centers.

Stage 5 – Public Engagement Events, Phase 2: Reality Check #2:

Timeline: Quarter 7 (July 1, 2012) through Quarter 10 (June 30, 2013)

Description: The draft plan and alternatives created from the region’s plans and strategies will be taken into the communities for education, clarification, feedback and revision. Building upon the outreach and input tools developed under stage 3, this phase of the project will continue to engage as many of the original participants as possible, while seeking new input and involvement. The goal will be widespread dissemination of the results of the previous stages and the establishment of realistic timelines to address expressed community needs. This stage will demonstrate to all stakeholders how they can stay engaged in the implementation of the strategy. Feedback will be thoroughly solicited on the draft to determine where needed changes should occur.

Goal: To gather widespread, unprecedented community input on the draft plan and alternatives and to incorporate that input into the draft.

Objectives:

- Conduct Second Reality Check Event
- Incorporate feedback into revised draft
- Ensure that community stakeholders understand how they can participate in implementation

Major Activities (with responsible party in red text)

- **Public Engagement Events, Phase 2: Reality Check #2.** Use draft Regional Plan to refine/revise future alternatives for public input. Broadly release and share draft Regional Plan. Get input/feedback on draft Regional Plan. **Consultant(s), RENCI, Consortium**

Products/Outcomes:

- Reality Check #2

Stage 6 – Refine and Release:

Timeline: Quarter 9 (January 1, 2012) through Quarter 11 (September 30, 2013)

Description: Based on the Stage 5 input, the Consortium will work cooperatively with each other and the consultants to produce a final Regional Plan. When refined, the Plan will be released publicly as a final product. Opportunities for community involvement will continue.

Goal: To incorporate public input into the final Regional Plan and to release it broadly to the public.

Objectives:

- Refine final Regional Plan
- Release to the public
- Continue opportunities for community involvement

Major Activities (with responsible party in red text)

- **Work with the Consortium and consultant(s) to revise the final Regional Plan.** Release broadly to the public. Continue opportunities for community involvement and feedback. **Land-of-Sky Staff, Consultant(s), Consortium**

Products/Outcomes:

- Final Regional Plan

Stage 7 – Implement Regional Plan:

Timeline: Quarter 4 (October 1, 2011) through Quarter 12 (December 31, 2013) and beyond

Description: Throughout this stage, we will seek opportunities to implement strategies and projects identified through the process. We will also work to develop a structure and funding opportunities for ongoing support of the project, so that it continues into the future. During Plan release, Consortium members will pursue broad-based regional and local adoption of the strategy. As appropriate, adjustments and changes will be made to other State, regional, and local plans and strategies. The outreach and input tools designed in previous Stages will continue to operate. As new data become available it will be seamlessly integrated into the Plan. New scenarios will be developed as needed and our region's future will unfold with newfound community involvement and long-term sustainability. This stage includes:

Activity 7: Identify proposed revisions to Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), and Regional Consolidated Housing and Community Development Plan

Goal: To implement the Regional Plan through incorporation of identified strategies and projects into other state, regional, and local plans, by seeking implementation opportunities throughout, and by developing an ongoing structure and funding strategy to carry the project forward.

Objectives:

- Identify opportunities to implement projects and strategies
- Develop structure and funding opportunities to carry project forward
- Regional and local adoption of Plan
- Adjustments to existing plans to reflect projects and strategies in Regional Plan
- Ongoing use of communication tools and collecting of public input
- Modifications of data and/or future scenarios as data changes
- Measure progress against benchmarks

Major Activities (with responsible party in red text)

- **Utilize LRTP, CEDS, and the Regional Consolidated Plans to link transportation, affordable housing and major employer and employment centers.** Analyze the various transportation, housing, land-use and region-wide planning reports to determine links, gaps and opportunities. Review feedback to confirm that it reflects community's breadth and diversity - refine strategies for incorporation into regional reports and plans. **Land-of-Sky staff (tracking and facilitating process), others (implementing and making changes)**

Products/Outcomes:

- Complete analysis of existing plans, reports and strategies; Coordinate discussions with housing, transportation and employment providers to develop short- and long-term implementation strategy

Long Term Outcome:

- Based on the Regional Plan, identify proposed revisions to the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) and the Regional Consolidated Strategic Housing and Community Development Plan 2010 -2015