

## **For Immediate Release**

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### **GroWNC Community Meetings Announced**

Public input sought on draft goals and objectives related to growth and economic development

**Asheville, NC (April 2012)** – The GroWNC Consortium announces a series of 5 Community Meetings scheduled to take place throughout the month of May to gather input and introduce the GroWNC initiative to the public. The GroWNC initiative focuses on growth and economic development in the five counties of Buncombe, Haywood, Henderson, Madison and Transylvania. Led by a Consortium of local governments, organizations and community members, GroWNC is using existing regional and local plans and building on that information with extensive public involvement and research, to produce action-oriented strategies for use by local governments and others in the region. The Community Meetings are a major component of the GroWNC public involvement effort.

Lang Hornthal, owner of Appalachian Designs and a member of the GroWNC Steering Committee remarks that: "It has been refreshing to see long term regional planning by the different local governments, as well as the many community agencies and businesses that are volunteering their time. It is equally important that we have diverse individual viewpoints about how our region should grow. The people that make up these counties are just as valuable as its resources and we hope to hear from many voices."

Community Meetings are scheduled to take place on May 10 in Madison County, May 15<sup>th</sup> in Hendersonville, May 16<sup>th</sup> in Haywood County, May 17<sup>th</sup> in Buncombe County, and May 30<sup>th</sup> in Transylvania County. At the meetings, the community is invited to join in a "Community Road Trip" to explore what makes our region special and what we can do together to keep it that way. The Community Meetings are designed to be a fun and interactive experience, and will give the public a chance to view and comment on the activities and findings of the GroWNC Workgroups.

At the Community Meetings, GroWNC Workgroups will display data and information about the region, as well as a set of draft goals and objectives for the future of our communities. Workgroup members from throughout the region, as well as project staff, will be available to answer questions and gather feedback from the public. Workgroups have been collaborating since January to develop goals, recommendations, and initial findings focused on

these core study areas: housing, transportation, land use, economic development, natural resources, cultural resources, energy, and public health. The Community Meetings will also feature local food and music, and an opportunity to participate in a door-prize drawing.

Members of the public who are unable to attend the Community Meetings can still participate in the GroWNC process. The GroWNC website, [www.gro-wnc.org](http://www.gro-wnc.org), features a variety of ways for the public to be involved. At the beginning of May, an Interactive Meeting will be made available which can be used by community groups, neighborhood associations, and others to provide their input if they cannot attend the Community Meetings. No knowledge of the project is required and the Interactive Meeting kit includes everything you need to easily participate.

GroWNC is funded by a grant from the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and is administered by Land-of-Sky Regional Council (LOSRC), with the assistance of an interdisciplinary team led by LandDesign. UNC-Asheville's National Environmental Modeling and Analysis Center (NEMAC) is working with Land-of-Sky and LandDesign to facilitate community outreach and assistance with modeling and mapping of results. The GroWNC Consortium is led by an 18-member Steering Committee, made up of representatives from across the region. The Steering Committee includes a representative of each Workgroup, three At-Large members, representatives from the region's local governments, and three Ex-Officio members from three state agency partners - the NC Department of Commerce, the NC Department of Environment and Natural Resources, and the NC Department of Transportation. The final outcomes and community vision are expected to be delivered to local governments at the end of 2012.

The complete Community Meeting Schedule, including locations, is as follows:

**May 10, 2012 – 4 – 7 pm – Madison County – Madison High School Media Center**

**May 15, 2012 – 4 – 7 pm – Hendersonville – City Operations Center**

**May 16, 2012 – 4 – 7 pm – Haywood County – Haywood Community College**

**May 17, 2012 – 4 – 7 pm – Buncombe County – Dr. Wesley Grant Sr. Southside Center**

**May 30, 2012 – 4 – 7 pm – Transylvania County – Transylvania County Public Library**

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### **Land-of-Sky Regional Council**

Land-of-Sky Regional Council (LOSRC) is a multi-county planning and development organization. It is one of 16 such organizations in the state and serves Region B, which includes

the counties of Buncombe, Henderson, Madison and Transylvania. LOSRC is composed of elected officials— mayors, county commission chairpersons and alternates—from member governments, one private representative of economic development interests in each county and two at-large members. Members meet monthly to plan programs and set policies and goals to benefit the entire region. LOSRC administers state and federal funds for community and economic development, serves as the Area Agency on Aging and is an affiliate of the NC State Data Center. For more information on GroWNC, visit [www.gro-wnc.org](http://www.gro-wnc.org) or call Land-of-Sky at 828-251-6622.