To The Henderson County Commissioners

From

Larry L. Rogers

February 15, 2012

Analysis of WNC Livable Communities Initiative
Or
GroWNC

I was appointed in November of 2011 as the Henderson County Commissioner's representative to a Steering Committee of a Federal Government funded study, referred to as WNC Livable Communities Initiative. The Land-Of-Sky Executive Director, Mr. Joe McKinney initially told me, that the process would begin in late November. However, it has been delayed. Also, reports that I received much later, but dated December 10, 2011, showed a name change of the study program. This Initiative data is now issued on letterheads showing GroWNC; Together We Create Our Future.

The Federal Government has awarded Land-Of-Sky a three year grant to develop a regional plan for sustainable growth and development. The entire program seems to be constructed to control and regulate our natural resources, land zoning, transportation and housing. It also intrudes into the business and commerce world by suggesting that employers must pay “living wages.” This study area covers five counties; Henderson, Buncombe, Haywood, Madison and Transylvania.

The specific subjects they list for Workgroup study and recommendations are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Housing</th>
<th>Transportation</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Energy</td>
<td>Jobs/Economic Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural &amp; Cultural Resources</td>
<td>Land Use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>Federal &amp; State Partners (2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communications &amp; Outreach (2)</td>
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</table>
Volunteers from the overall Consortium Membership will self-select which Workgroups they wish to attend, up to a point. Land-Of-Sky reserves the right to pick and choose how each of the Workgroups is formed.

Currently there are about forty groups that are listed as members of the overall Consortium Membership (anybody can join) and the list is very troublesome. In breaking down the list, there are about twenty from Asheville and another four or five from Buncombe County. Even worse, my sources point out there are about eighteen to twenty of these groups that are listed as being very environmental friendly, environmental extremist, to some they never heard of. A couple of the members on the list seemed to have been hired as private study groups. Yes, these are the folks that will make up the Workgroups.

The initial Land-Of-Sky rules, states that the Steering Committee would guide the process, including the list of issues the Workgroups would undertake. However, that is not happening. Some of the Workgroups have already been formed and are holding meetings with no guidance from the Steering Committee. I am told that the Steering Committee will not be formed until late March or April.

Now, lets take a look at how the Steering Committee will be formed. It is made up of sixteen members, with thirteen voting members. Each County, plus the City of Asheville, gets one member with a vote. That is only six votes! The remaining seven voting members will be selected by Land-Of-Sky from the seven Workgroups. Plus, the Federal & State Workgroup will have three non-voting members, one each from the State Dept. of Commerce, DENR and NCDOT. You can bet they will not just sit there and say nothing!

It gets worse. Land-Of-Sky has rigged the rules to trump any recommendations or strategies they do not like. They have given themselves the authority to rearrange the Steering Committees to achieve equity, as they see fit and as they define equity. They list a category of individuals for possible membership that might be under represented, if they don’s like a particular line of results. Their list includes Native Americans, the elderly, the disabled, African American, Hispanic, Ukrainian, persons in poverty, those with chronic diseases,
those living in low income housing, the young and yes, even a small business owner!

Some **troubling items** that will be discussed during the project will include..... paying living wages, sustainable employment, expanding **green transportation choices**, **renewable energy sources**, pushing **Federal policies**, protect the natural resources and promote **equitable affordable housing**. In my opinion these subjects have the ring of socialism.

**Recommendation**

After much study and thought, I recommend that Henderson County **decline** to participate in this controlled three-year social and environmental planning study that would totally change and restrict our way of life. Someone from Land-Of-Sky or another governmental agency would possibly be attending our Planning Board and Commissioner Meetings to insure compliance of the adopted rules. They would hold sway over County budget matters to make sure they receive their fees and all penalties for misbehavior.

From the beginning, we see that Henderson County property and business owners are vastly outnumbered with folks from Asheville, Buncombe County and the extreme environmentalists. We can see the list of individuals and groups who are lining up to push their social version of sharing equally. This is a planned event with a predictable outcome. It is a guarantee to stir up heated debate and give our extreme environmentalists a platform to generate great unrest in the community.

I am told that this is a project dreamed up in Washington, to make it seem as if all these new controls and restriction demands are coming from the grass root people in the communities and not from the top down. This is a rigged, despicable and costly project.

**Larry L Rogers**
As of November 15, 2011

AdvantageWest
Asheville Area Habitat for Humanity
Asheville Chamber of Commerce
Asheville Design Center
Asheville Housing Authority
Asheville-Buncombe Sustainable Communities Initiative
Blue Ridge Sustainability Institute
Bountiful Cities
Buncombe County
Buncombe County Department of Health
City of Asheville
City of Brevard
Community Foundation of WNC
Community Housing Coalition of Madison County
French Broad River MPO
Good Stuff
Henderson County
Just Economics
Land-of-Sky Regional Council
Land-of-Sky RPO
Madison County
North Carolina Department of Commerce
North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources
North Carolina Department of Transportation
Nutter Associates
Sims & Steele Consulting
Town of Clyde
Town of Marshall
Town of Montreat
Town of Waynesville
Transition Asheville Common Table
Transylvania County Board of Commissioners
UNC Asheville’s National Environmental Modeling and Analysis Center (NEMAC)
WaysSouth
Western North Carolina Alliance
Western North Carolina Green Building Council
YMCA of WNC’s Pioneering Healthier Communities Initiative
GroWNC Team

Land-of-Sky Regional Council has partnered with a Consultant Team headed by LandDesign. Click here for more information on the Consultant Team members.

Land-of-Sky Regional Council staff with primary responsibility for GroWNC include:

Joe McKinney
Executive Director

Ron Townley
Director of Local Government Services

Carrie Runser-Turner
Senior Planner - GroWNC Project Manager

Linda Giltz
Senior Planner - Land Use & Growth Management

Karen Kiehna
Senior Planner - Community Development

http://www.gro-wnc.org/team.html

12/10/2011
Hi Mr. Rogers –

Thanks for calling me this morning. I had been planning on calling you today as well! I wanted to provide you with some more information about the GroWNC project. I have attached a one-page overview of the project which gives you a bit of introduction. You mentioned you had already looked at the website, but if you haven’t already done so you may want to check out our FAQ document, available here: [http://www.gro-wnc.org/faq.html](http://www.gro-wnc.org/faq.html). You may also be interested in more information about the Consortium ([http://www.gro-wnc.org/consortium.html](http://www.gro-wnc.org/consortium.html)), the Workgroups ([http://www.gro-wnc.org/workgroups.html](http://www.gro-wnc.org/workgroups.html)), and the process by which the Steering Committee will form ([http://www.gro-wnc.org/steeringcommittee.html](http://www.gro-wnc.org/steeringcommittee.html)).

As I noted on the phone, the Workgroups have just started meeting. All of them have meetings coming up in mid-February, followed by an additional round of meetings in March. I have copied their schedule below. We hope that the Workgroups will make their nominations to the Steering Committee in March. Shortly after that, I expect the Steering Committee to begin meeting – either in late March or early April.

I’ve added you to the GroWNC mailing list so you will be getting all of our regular updates. I’d also be happy to talk with you more over the phone, or come meet with you in person to provide more detail about the project. I will be out of the office next week Monday – Wednesday, but am available Thursday afternoon or anytime Friday if you would like for me to come meet with you. I’ll be checking email while I’m away, but if you have questions and need to reach me my cell phone is 828-279-9730.

Thanks again – I look forward to working with you on this project!

Carrie

Upcoming Workgroup Meetings

**Economic Development:**
- Thursday, February 16 from 9 – 10:30 AM
- Tuesday, March 13 from 3 – 5 PM

**Energy:**
- Monday, February 13 from 10 AM – 12 PM
- Tuesday, March 13 from 10 AM – 12 PM

**Health:**
- Tuesday, February 21 from 3 – 5 PM (at Interchange Building, 59 Woodfin Place, Asheville, NC 28801)
- Tuesday, March 13 from 3 – 5 PM

**Housing:**
- Tuesday, February 14 from 10 AM – 12 PM
- Tuesday, March 13 from 10 AM – 12 PM

http://us.mc1612.mail.yahoo.com/mc/showMessage?smid=7&filterBy=&rand=950936520... 2/6/2012
**Land Use:**
Thursday, February 16 from 9 – 10:30 AM  
Wednesday, March 14 from 10 AM – 12 PM

**Resources:**
Monday, February 13 from 1:30 – 3:30 PM  
Wednesday, March 14 from 3 – 5 PM

**Transportation:**
Thursday, February 16 from 1 – 3 PM  
Wednesday, March 14 from 3 – 5 PM

**Communications:**
Thursday, February 16 from 1 – 3 PM  
Thursday, March 15 from 10 AM – 12 PM

*unless otherwise noted, meetings take place at Land-of-Sky Regional Council, 339 New Leicester Highway, Suite 140, Asheville, NC 28806

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http://us.mc1621.mail.yahoo.com/mc/showMessage?sMid=7&filterBy=&rand=950936520... 2/6/2012
GROWNC

GROWNC

Together, we create our future.

WHY:

On the map, Henderson, Madison, and Transylvania.

The study area includes the five counties of Buncombe.

WHERE:

Facilitating planning and engagement.

A consortium of local governments, economic development

WHO:

Recognizing the interconnectedness of land use, energy, natural and cultural resources.

How:

Building on existing plans and strategies; ensuring extensive public involvement.

Sustainable development.

WHAT:

The creation of a regional vision and strategies for economic prosperity, quality growth.

So that together, we create our future.

Phone: 828.251.6622 • www.grownc.org
389 New Leicester Hwy. Suite 140 • Asheville, NC 28806
Welcome to GroWNC!

GroWNC is a listening and planning process to develop regional and local strategies for economic prosperity, quality growth, and sustainable development. Working in the five county region of Buncombe, Haywood, Henderson, Madison, and Transylvania counties, the GroWNC project team will work with a Consortium of local governments, non-profit organizations, and businesses to seek significant input from residents of the region, gather existing and historical data, and synthesize it to create a vision of the future.

Together we 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. Won't you join us?

Latest News

Upcoming Events

**Website Launch**

**DEC 7**

Wednesday, December 7, 2011
1:00 pm

Highland-Ridge Regional Council Meeting Room

**DETA 15**

Thursday, December 15, 2011
9:00 am

Location TBA

Workgroup Launch Meeting

**FEB 19**

Thursday, January 19, 2011
10:00 am

Location TBA

http://www.gro-wnc.org/
GroWNC will be guided by a Consortium representing residents and organizations in Buncombe, Haywood, Henderson, Transylvania, and Madison Counties. The Consortium will include members from public and private housing, planning, transportation, economic development, research, educational and philanthropic organizations, and others. The purpose of the Consortium will be to oversee the development of a regional plan that weaves together existing plans and strategies throughout the region to foster economic prosperity through a regional vision that identifies implementable projects and actions. The Initiative will include significant public outreach and involvement throughout.

Membership
Click here for a full list of current Consortium Members.

Leadership
The Consortium will be led by a 13-member Steering Committee, which will be responsible for prioritizing work activities, participating in the selection of consultants, approving public involvement approaches, and making critical recommendations to guide the project and staff. Click here for more information about the Steering Committee.

Benefits
Consortium members will:

- Shape the regional plan
- Gain access to tools, models, data, and best practices
- Assist with ensuring that a broad spectrum of communities and organizations are involved
- Identify funding opportunities and opportunities for implementation of identified projects
- Receive Preferred Sustainability Status on selected federal grant applications. Click here for more information.

Join the Consortium
If your organization is interested in joining the GroWNC Consortium, please click here for more information on how to join.
As of November 15, 2011

AdvantageWest
Asheville Area Habitat for Humanity
Asheville Chamber of Commerce
Asheville Design Center
Asheville Housing Authority
Asheville-Buncombe Sustainable Communities Initiative
Blue Ridge Sustainability Institute
Bountiful Cities
Buncombe County
Buncombe County Department of Health
City of Asheville
City of Brevard
Community Foundation of WNC
Community Housing Coalition of Madison County
French Broad River MPO
Good Stuff
Henderson County
Just Economics
Land-of-Sky Regional Council
Land-of-Sky RPO
Madison County
North Carolina Department of Commerce
North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources
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Sims & Steele Consulting
Town of Clyde
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WaysSouth
Western North Carolina Alliance
Western North Carolina Green Building Council
YMCA of WNC’s Pioneering Healthier Communities Initiative
GroWNC Workgroups

All consortium members will self-select into one of several Workgroups, organized around the topic areas listed below. Workgroups will focus on the specific topic areas and will form smaller cross-sector subgroups (with representation across multiple Workgroups) as needed to complete various tasks and ensure that deeper analysis cuts across various topic areas. Collaboration amongst Workgroup members, and across workgroups, will be a critical element of the project. We anticipate that the Workgroups will evolve over the course of the project. The study areas around which the Workgroups are organizing initially are meant to be starting points to provide a framework for formation of the groups. It is possible that Workgroups will combine or otherwise shift their focus as the project progresses.

Workgroup Topic Areas

- Housing
- Transportation
- Energy
- Jobs/Economic Development
- Natural and Cultural Resources
- Land Use
- Health
- Federal and State Partners
- Communications and Outreach

Additional Workgroups

- Communications and Outreach
- Federal and State Partners

Workgroup Tasks

The Workgroups will assist the Project Team and Steering Committee in a variety of ways, including:

- assist with recruitment of other pertinent organizations to Consortium and Workgroups
- participate in nominations to the GroWNC Steering Committee (see Steering Committee page for more Information on this process)
- form partnerships
- assist with review of existing plans and data
- identify opportunities and challenges
- develop strategies
- assist with public involvement
- assist with further development of additional workgroup tasks
- look for ways to implement projects identified in the planning process

The Project Team will meet with the Workgroups at three distinct phases of the project, in focused, facilitated work sessions. Ongoing assignments and communications will be delivered throughout the process via email.

Round 1 Workgroup Meetings will take place prior to Reality Check #1 and include work sessions that will synthesize information presented by the Project Team. The Workgroups will be asked to identify the issues and opportunities that will further define regional goals and values.

Round 2 Workgroup Meetings will focus on generating alternatives and will be in

http://www.gro-wnc.org/workgroups.html

2/6/2012
response to the results generated at Reality Check #1.

Round 3 Workgroup Meetings will focus on Policy Framework & Implementation Strategy Formulation.

Timeline / Meetings:
Workgroups will meet several times throughout the course of the project. There will be an organizational meeting for all Workgroups in January 19, 2012, with several meetings immediately following. Reality Check #1 will be held in spring 2012, and the workgroups will convene again after the first Reality Check to review the input received. They will also play a role in review of the final draft plan towards the end of the project.
Workgroup meetings are always open to the public. Minutes from workgroup meetings will be posted on each Workgroup's page.
GroWNC Steering Committee

The Consortium will be led by a 13-member Steering Committee, which will be responsible for prioritizing work activities, participating in the selection of consultants, approving public involvement approaches, and making critical recommendations to guide the project and staff. Steering Committee members will be appointed according to the process outlined below.

The Steering Committee will meet bi-monthly. The Steering Committee shall form subject-specific subcommittees as needed to work on tasks with staff when action or a decision is needed between meetings.

The Steering Committee will be made up of members appointed by the following process:

- The City of Asheville will have one seat, appointed by Asheville City Council (the central city is a required member under HUD guidelines).
- The County Commissioners of each County will each appoint one member to represent the county and its municipalities. It is hoped that these representatives will be distributed across the region’s geography and from communities of varying sizes (rural, suburban, and urban).
- Each Workgroup will nominate 2 - 3 individuals as candidates for appointment to the Steering Committee. From those Workgroup nominations, the Land-of-Sky Regional Council Board will appoint one representative from each Workgroup (for a total of 7 representatives of the Workgroups). The Land-of-Sky Regional Council Board will be responsible for achieving equity in the Workgroup appointments to the Steering Committee, ensuring geographic diversity, inclusion of under-represented communities, and representation from a variety of sectors (non-profit organizations, local governments, business). The Land-of-Sky Regional Council Board may recommend changes to the Steering Committee structure if deemed necessary to meet the Consortium's equity goals.
- The Federal and State Partners Workgroup will have 3 Ex-Officio (non-voting) representatives on the Steering Committee, one each from the North Carolina Department of Commerce, the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources, and the North Carolina Department of Transportation.

Steering Committee members should be willing to:

- commit their time to participating actively in the Initiative, including a commitment to attend a minimum of 80% of Steering Committee meetings;
- provide leadership, share work responsibilities, and listen to their fellow Steering Committee and Consortium members; and
- communicate with and represent the interests of their workgroups and constituencies.
Frequently Asked Questions about GroWNC

Download the GroWNC FAQ

1. What is GroWNC?
GroWNC is first and foremost a listening process, so that together, we may create our future. It is also a planning effort that will examine core issues relating to growth in a five county portion of the WNC region. The residents of Buncombe, Haywood, Henderson, Madison and Transylvania Counties will be asked for their input, their ideas, and their solutions related to economic development and job creation, natural and cultural resources, housing, transportation, land use, energy, and health that will help to create a plan for our future.

2. Wasn’t it called something else? Livable Communities Initiative?
Yes, it was. Our planning team felt it would be better understood if we used an action term to convey the concepts of growing together as a region; growing our choices in Housing, Transportation, Energy, Land Use, Health and Natural Resources...all coming together to achieving Economic Growth and Prosperity for the region.

3. What is the purpose of GroWNC?
GroWNC is an effort to generate interest within our community in collectively working together to create our future. GroWNC seeks to identify actionable steps and ideas towards creating more jobs, lowering housing and transportation costs, and using our natural and cultural resources so that our children and grandchildren can enjoy them.

4. Isn’t this just another plan? A regional vision?
There are many valid, viable, thoughtful efforts and plans that exist throughout the five county study area, but they are not connected or integrated. To date, no one group has pulled them together in order to synthesize the information and ideas into identifiable action items from which to act and grow. This effort will pull together plans from across the region, primarily those that speak to economic development, housing, land use, transportation, energy, and health.

5. Who is facilitating this effort?
Land-of-Sky Regional Council was asked by area local governments to serve as the grant administrator and coordinating agency for GroWNC, also known as the WNC Livable Communities Initiative.

Land-of-Sky Regional Council contracted with LandDesign, a planning and design firm with an office in Asheville, NC. LandDesign assembled an interdisciplinary team of economic, housing, transportation and communication experts to gather data, facilitate communication, synthesize and present the information back to the region.

UNC Asheville’s National Environmental Modeling and Analysis Center (NEMAC) is working with Land-of-Sky and LandDesign to facilitate community outreach and mapping of results.

http://www.gro-wnc.org/faq.html
6. What is Land-of-Sky?
Land-of-Sky Regional Council (LOSRC) is a multi-county, local government planning and development organization in North Carolina. It is one of 17 such organizations in the state and serves Region B, which includes the counties of Buncombe, Henderson, Madison and Transylvania.

LOSRC is made up of elected officials - mayors and 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 aids and assists local governments in various ways including: administration, planning, fiscal management, community and economic development, grant writing, and serving as a convener for regional issue management. LOSRC also analyzes trends and advises on program changes and the availability of funding and programs that are important to their local governments and the region.

LOSRC administers state and federal funds for community and economic development, serve as area agencies on aging and are affiliates of the NC State Data Center.

7. How is GroWNC funded?
Our federal tax dollars are funding this effort, through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. This money is coming back to our communities to be used in a meaningful way. Our region is one of 45 initial awardees from across the nation; 29 additional regions were awarded funds in November 2011.

8. What if communities disagree? Will results be used at a local level?
All of us work together to determine a regional direction, but with the understanding that what works for one county may not work for another. The unique diversity of each community and county will influence the identification of common goals and action items to share with the region. Communities can select which action items to address together in order to accomplish those goals.

GroWNC acknowledges and respects the positions of individual communities differing on specific topics. It is expected that not all communities and local governments in our region will agree on every issue or recommendation.

9. Do local governments have to adopt the GroWNC recommendations?
No, but with the effort that all will have invested to ensure a successful process, the result will be an end product that can be utilized locally for many years to come.

10. Does this have anything to do with UN Agenda 21?
GroWNC has nothing to do with a concept called Agenda 21.

According to the United Nations, Agenda 21 is "a comprehensive plan of action to be taken globally, nationally and locally by organizations of the United Nations System, Governments, and Major Groups in every area in which human impacts on the environment." It was adopted by 178 Governments at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 3 to 14 June 1992.
http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/agenda21/

Unlike the focus of Agenda 21, GroWNC will work with the residents in the five counties in the study area to develop strategies to preserve and strengthen local economies, which ultimately strengthens the regional economy. These strategies can be adopted by the local governing bodies, or modified to suit their unique situations and goals.

11. How can I participate?

http://www.gro-wnc.org/faq.html
There are many different ways to participate in GroWNC:

- **Consortium participation.** The GroWNC Consortium is made up of a mix of representatives from the governing bodies from each county, nonprofits, community groups, public and private housing groups, planning, transportation, economic development, research, educational and philanthropic organizations, and other groups interested in the future of our region. An ongoing member list will be updated and posted on the GroWNC website throughout the process. Interested groups can request to become a Consortium member, submit a signed agreement, and participate on that level. If you are not a Consortium member, but have ideas for the future of our region, please share your thoughts with these active participants.

- **Workgroup participation.** Workgroups will be formed around key topic areas. We are seeking interdisciplinary participation for this process, and particularly want to hear from members of our communities not typically represented or in attendance at planning processes, but perhaps are most affected by their outcomes. Consortium members must commit to have representation on a Workgroup. Workgroup meetings will always be open to the public. Interested residents can attend these meetings or share their thoughts and ideas with the Workgroups.

- **Community group participation.** There are many planning processes and efforts in our region; we have an active community! Continue to support those groups and share your feedback and planning ideas as you produce them.

- **Tell Us!** Drop us a line. Email us. Text us. Let us know your thoughts and ideas.

- **GroWNC@landofsky.org**

- **Reality Check participation.** We will have two major meetings with our communities - one in the Spring and one in the Fall of 2012. The first Reality Check will share the initial findings from the information gathering, research, and synthesis phase. You’ll have an opportunity at that point to tell us how close or far off we are from your long range vision for the region. We’ll take that input and begin working on the overall plan for the final Reality Check. You can then double check our work and our listening skills and again offer new ideas and input.

**12. How can my group or organization participate in the Consortium?**

In general, the Consortium members are representatives from local governments and organizations in Buncombe, Haywood, Henderson, Madison and Transylvania Counties. There are already several members and we encourage local governments, businesses, educational institutions, non-profit organizations and others to join.

To be actively involved in a workgroup or steering committee, you or your organization must be part of the Consortium. An agreement can be found on our website, under the Get Involved and the Consortium tabs. Complete this agreement and send it to GroWNC@landofsky.org. A complete list of Consortium members can also be found on the website.

**13. How can I participate in a Workgroup?**

We are pleased to have so many people and organizations across the five counties interested in participating in GroWNC. We are currently building our database (complete a form online, via our consortium members or steering committee members) of people who would like to be involved. While the meetings will be open to anyone who is interested in attending, we will be seeking commitments from a core group who will attend a minimum of five meetings. The goal for each workgroup will be to have a cross-section of the range of stakeholders, including:

- representatives of the five counties,
- representatives of local/regional/state organizations,
- representatives of organizations who can provide technical input as they are working directly with the data and have intimate knowledge of the issues to be addressed,
- representatives of various segments of the population in terms of age, socio-economic background, employment, and geographic location,
- representatives of a range of interest groups (environmental orgs, business community, real estate/development groups, etc.), and
- those that are typically underrepresented or served in these processes, but are often most impacted.
Please complete a project involvement form (found on the Website, under Engage and the Workgroups tab). This will, at a minimum, keep you on our list of people to notify about upcoming meetings.

14. How can I participate in a Steering Committee?
To become a Steering Committee member make sure your county officials and Workgroup members know of your interest.

Each county makes an appointment to the Steering Committee. This is not necessarily a seat for an elected official or staff; it could be anyone representing any entity.

Workgroups will also nominate members. The Land-of-Sky Regional Council Board will review and select representation.

The Land-of-Sky Regional Council Board has been charged with ensuring that representation maintains:

- Geographic distribution across the five counties
- Representation by under-represented communities
- Diversity of members (including local government, non-profits, and private businesses)

15. How will you know about all of the planning processes and groups that exist?
For forty-five years, Land-of-Sky and local governments have been working together and have demonstrated experience working in the community.

While this is the most comprehensive effort, we will strive to make sure participation in the Consortium, representation on the workgroups and Steering Committee are all reflective of the planning processes to date and the topic areas of economic development, transportation, housing, energy, cultural and natural resources, land use and health.

The GroWNC website ([www.gro-wnc.org](http://www.gro-wnc.org)) is also a great resource for us all. Check the Get Involved page, the News page, and any of the Workgroups to make sure we’re up to date. You can also send us a link or latest work product from your group via our email and contact form on the website.

16. What’s in it for me? Why participate?
Through this effort, we work together to create our future. Your participation can help shape the outcomes, providing us all with identifiable action steps that will benefit our communities.

We all know there are limited resources; this process will enable us to better understand the capacity we have to effectively use those resources in order to create positive outcomes that benefit our community.

17. How can I find out more? How are you communicating with the public?
We plan to keep you updated via our website: [www.gro-wnc.org](http://www.gro-wnc.org) and through social networking platforms. We'll also have a blog, an email newsletter to keep you up to date on progress and to provide opportunities for input. Our team will:

- Provide routine updates via press releases to the local and regional media, including non-English speaking outlets.
- Network with key community groups by copying them on our press releases and updates.
- Work with Literacy Councils and non-English speaking service organizations to ensure all levels of comprehension are met.
- Offer presentations via speakers' bureaus or ambassadors to present to community groups, civic clubs, business groups, industry leaders, and elected officials.
- Utilize county and city websites and newsletters, and public access channels.
- Work with utility companies to send information and important announcements via water and power bills.
- Provide opportunities to meet in our more rural communities, accessing residents via meetings at fire stations, libraries, churches, gas stations, and local community centers.