



Vibrant Communities – Robust Region

Memorandum of Understanding

For CONNECT Consortium Membership for Mecklenburg County, North Carolina

WHEREAS, over 50 jurisdictions serving 70% of the CONNECT region's (as defined on page A-4 of the attached Exhibit A) population have adopted the CONNECT Regional Vision (as defined on page A-4 of the attached Exhibit A), based on a set of Core Values (as defined on page A-4 of the attached Exhibit A) compiled from adopted local policies, plans and programs, and

WHEREAS, those jurisdictions and other non-profit and private sector partners identified the development of a strategic regional framework for implementing these Core Values as the "next step" to achieve this community-based vision; and

WHEREAS, the federal Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant Program (the Program) operated by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) on behalf of the US Department of Transportation, US Environmental Protection Agency, and HUD, incorporates Livability Principles (as defined in the Program documents) that align closely with CONNECT's Core Values, and provides a funding source for development of CONNECT's needed regional strategic framework for effectively and efficiently addressing growth and community economic revitalization; and

WHEREAS, the Centralina Council of Governments (CCOG) and the Catawba Regional Council of Governments (CRCOG) established the CONNECT Consortium, as defined on page A-3 of the attached Exhibit A, as a representative body to develop a grant application based on the CONNECT Vision to HUD for Program funds, and to support local governments, non-profits, academic institutions and other groups representing the region's diversity, in their work to further sound growth, regional and local economies built to last, vibrant communities, and inclusive public engagement and decision-making; and

WHEREAS, CCOG as Lead Applicant submitted the application to the Program on behalf of the Consortium on October 5th, 2011, was notified of grant approval on November 21, 2011, and entered into a Cooperative Agreement with HUD to carry out the work of the application with an effective date of February 1, 2012; and

WHEREAS, CCOG, CRCOG, and the Consortium will continue this collaborative approach to carry out the work funded in the application to move the CONNECT Core Values into a community-based, regionally-inclusive strategic framework for action to help communities address economic growth, quality of life, and fiscal stability now, and to create better prospects for our children and grandchildren;

NOW, THEREFORE, Mecklenburg County agrees to the following by signing this memorandum of understanding:

1. To participate as a member of the CONNECT Consortium in the development of the “CONNECT Our Future” Regional Strategic Framework (the Framework) incorporating regional and local plans to support vital communities, economic growth, improved quality of life and environment, and efficient public investments, with funding provided in part from a Program grant (the Grant);
2. As a Consortium member, to engage in review of work products, reports, data, proposed strategies and implementation approaches, and to actively engage with fellow Consortium members in collaborative approaches to problem-solving the challenges, barriers, and opportunities faced by the region and by communities within the region;
3. To affirm the goals, principles, and participatory and functional structure for accomplishing the work of “CONNECT Our Future” as outlined in Exhibit A, attached and incorporated herein by reference;
4. To appoint one policy-level representative (elected official/CEO/board member) and named alternate(s) to the Consortium’s Policy Forum, and one staff representative and named alternate(s) empowered to speak at the staff level to the Consortium’s Program Forum (as defined on Page A-3 of Exhibit A) to represent the perspective of Mecklenburg County at meetings of the Consortium, ensuring that the interests, needs, and plans of Mecklenburg County are included; and to notify the CCOG of any changes in representation;
5. If requested, to appoint a policy-level representative to the CONNECT Council (as defined on Page A-3 of Exhibit A).
6. To have representation and participation in Consortium Program and Support Teams (as defined on pages A-2 and A-3 of Exhibit A) appropriate to Mecklenburg County’s mission;
7. To communicate with Mecklenburg County’s staff/residents/members the work of the Consortium, and to assist the Consortium with outreach to them and to persons who typically do not participate in community planning processes, so that they may be included in public and community engagement activities for community problem-solving and to develop the Framework;
8. To provide any staff support, meeting space, or other in-kind or cash assistance as outlined in Mecklenburg County’s letter of support for the Grant dated September 26, 2011, and resolution of support for the Grant dated July 12, 2011, both of which are included as Exhibit B and incorporated herein by reference, it being understood that participation as a Consortium member does not preclude Mecklenburg County from potential eligibility as a subgrantee or subcontractor to the Consortium pursuant to the Grant;
9. To share relevant data, maps, plans, and successes with other Consortium members to promote mutual understanding of the issues and capacity-building among all Consortium members;
10. To recognize CCOG as a CONNECT Consortium member with full voice at all Consortium meetings; and
11. To recognize CCOG as Lead Applicant and Project Manager, and CRCOG as Lead Partner for the Grant solely as a benefit and convenience to Mecklenburg County and not to hold either CCOG or CRCOG liable in any manner in such capacity.

AND FURTHERMORE, the CCOG agrees, on its own behalf, as a member of the CONNECT Consortium, to abide by the immediately preceding 11 membership obligations.

AND FURTHERMORE, the CCOG agrees to confer, either directly for entities in North Carolina, or through its Lead Partner CRCOG in South Carolina, the following benefits of participation in the CONNECT Consortium:

1. Recognize Mecklenburg County as a CONNECT Consortium member with full voice at all Consortium meetings;
2. Notify Mecklenburg County of all Consortium activities and opportunities for participation;
3. Provide Mecklenburg County with access to information and data collected by the Consortium pursuant to this project;
4. Work with Mecklenburg County to provide multiple opportunities for public engagement in the development of the Framework;
5. Notify Mecklenburg County of opportunities for webinars, conferences, and other national best-practice learning opportunities for staff and policy-maker capacity-building through the National Sustainable Communities Learning Network (as defined on page A-5 of the attached Exhibit A);
6. Provide educational and informational opportunities to Mecklenburg County that support and assist the organization's participation in development of the Framework or build its capacity for ongoing regional work;
7. The CCOG will assist Mecklenburg County in identifying potential funding opportunities to support implementation of projects emerging from or supportive of the Framework;
8. Recognize Mecklenburg County's Consortium membership as meeting a prerequisite for eligibility for Preferred Sustainability Status Bonus Points (as defined on page A-5 of the attached Exhibit A) or other consideration by Federal funding agencies, which may assist Mecklenburg County in obtaining federal support for planning or implementation projects aligned with the goals of the Program; and
9. Notify Mecklenburg County of Requests for Proposals for work related to the performance of the Grant.

THIS AGREEMENT shall be in effect from the date of adoption through March 31, 2015, and may be renewed by mutual written agreement among the parties. This agreement may be amended by the mutual written consent of both parties, provided that approval for such amendment is given as was given for the initial agreement.

Either party may elect to terminate this Agreement by providing 30 days' written notification to the other party's Chief Executive Officer. Organizations withdrawing from the Consortium will be accountable for any data or maps promised due prior to the date of their withdrawal.

Adopted this _____ day of _____, 2012.

MECKLENBURG COUNTY:

CCOG:

Authorized Signature

Martha Sue Hall, Chairperson

Witness

Jim Prosser, Executive Director

Approved as to Form:

Steve Meckler, CCOG Legal Counsel

Exhibit A

CONNECT Consortium

GOALS, FUNCTIONAL ORGANIZATION AND OPERATING PRINCIPLES

The CONNECT Consortium, and the development of the “CONNECT Our Future” Regional Strategic Framework are designed to be inclusive, publicly- and community-driven, and designed to produce strong and vibrant communities that, working together, produce a strong and vibrant region. This was the approach used in the development of the CONNECT Core Values and Vision, and is the approach that will be continued with this work. The Goals and Principles under which the Consortium will work, and its Functional Organization, each as defined below, are based on this underlying approach.

GOALS:

The overarching goals of the Consortium are to:

- Create the “CONNECT Our Future” Regional Strategic Framework as a platform to help communities and the region reaching economic and quality of life goals; and
- Develop a forum and process for ongoing collaborative problem-solving to address emerging regional and community issues in the future.

Specific deliverables for the Consortium include:

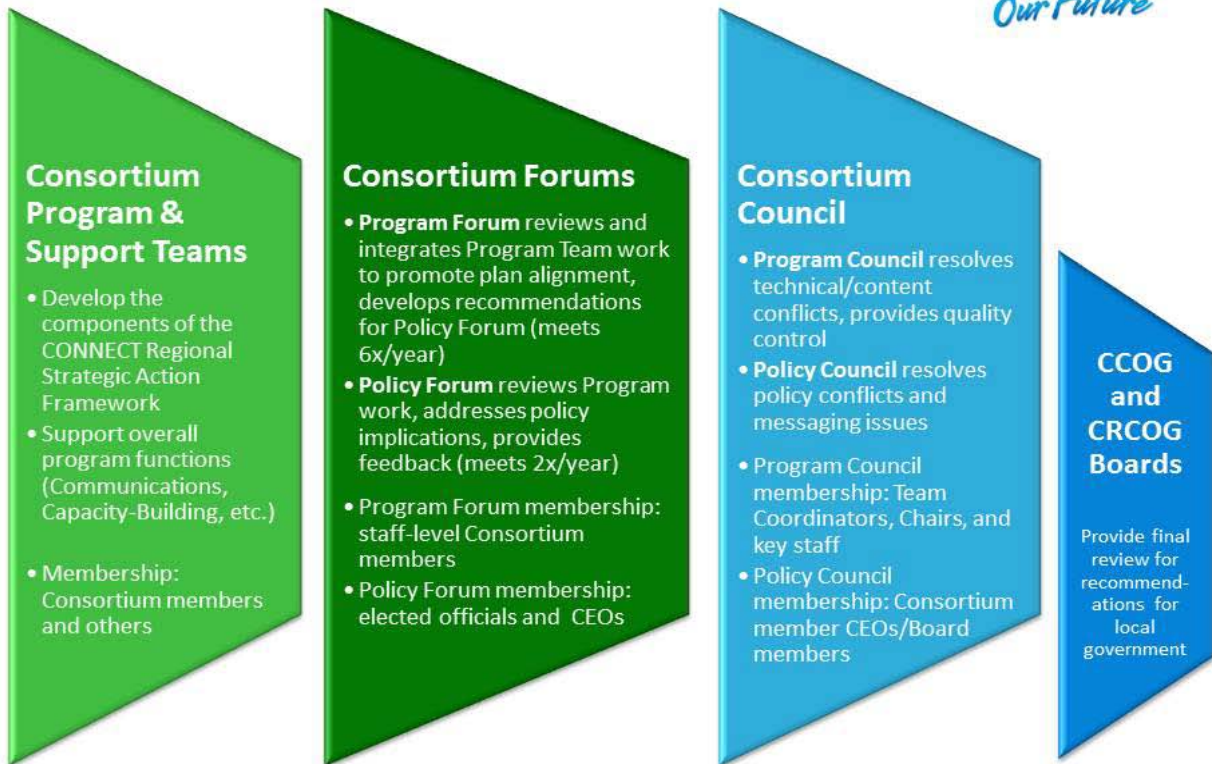
1. The “CONNECT Our Future” Regional Strategic Framework that includes:
 - a. A Regional Preferred Development Scenario (as defined on page A-5 of this Exhibit A) developed through extensive public engagement process and data analysis that informs long-range planning for the region’s future growth;
 - b. An effective place-based economic development strategy that focuses on job creation, workforce readiness, and community revitalization, including strategies to address the most opportunity-poor neighborhoods;
 - c. Assessments and strategies for housing that meets community needs, both now and in the future;
 - d. Assessments and strategies to reduce emissions and enhance the region’s air quality;
 - e. Assessments and strategies that help grow the local food industry while providing healthy foods in areas of need; and
 - f. Assessments and strategies for energy conservation and job growth in the energy field.
2. A functional framework and process for ongoing communication, collaboration, and problem-solving that engages public, non-profit, and private organizations across boundaries.

FUNCTIONAL ORGANIZATION:

The CONNECT Consortium is being organized as a vehicle to successfully accomplish the work required to meet the goals, not to serve as another governmental structure. As such, its organization is designed to produce the “CONNECT Our Future” Regional Strategic Framework, and its component elements, and to assist communities and the region with a broad range of problem-solving around growth, economic development, natural resources, and infrastructure planning. The following charts outline the functional

process and structures that will be used to accomplish this work:

How the CONNECT Sustainable Communities Grant Work Gets Done...



CONNECT Teams



Program Teams will develop the content for the “CONNECT Our Future” Regional Strategic Framework, including the identification of a Regional Preferred Development Scenario through the Blueprinting process (as defined on page A-5 of this Exhibit A), as well as the development and integration of place-based economic development strategies, housing, energy, food access and other plans. Program teams are open to Consortium members and non-members based on expertise and interest.

Support Teams will provide services, resources, and overall project management needed by all work groups, such as communications materials and strategies, and financial and contract processing. Each team will have a CCOG Team Coordinator who will serve as project manager for that team, with CRCOG liaisons for each team. Each program team (and some support teams) will be led by a non-CCOG or CRCOG Team Chair selected by the team. Both Program and Support Teams may be reconfigured as needed to accomplish the work of the Program.

The Consortium will include all members who have signed a Consortium Agreement in the form of that agreement to which this **Exhibit A** is attached, and is open to any interested organization, local government, or private entity willing to do so. The Consortium will integrate the content produced by the Program Teams to create the Framework, working at two levels. They are:

- The Program Forum: Senior staff, department heads, content experts, and other Consortium representatives who review and integrate Program Team components of the Framework, identify potential policy questions, resolve content or technical conflicts to the extent possible, and ensure that Framework elements work in sync. The Program Forum will meet bi-monthly.
- The Policy Forum: Elected officials, private and non-profit sector CEOs and/or Board members who examine policy implications and messaging issues, identify needed policy or regulatory changes, provide feedback to the Program Forum, and resolve policy-related conflicts to the extent possible. The Policy Forum will meet semi-annually.

The Consortium also is the body that endorses the final Framework, through both Forums and with heavy stakeholder engagement.

The CONNECT Council will provide oversight in the sense of quality control and conflict resolution when the Consortium cannot reach a consensus position. The Council, like the Consortium, will be organized in the two divisions below to address technical/programmatic/content issues, and to resolve important policy conflicts.

- The Program Council will be composed of key staff, Team Coordinators, and Team Chairs.
- The Policy Council will be composed of members appointed from the Consortium by, and including members of, the Executive Boards of both CCOG and CRCOG, supplemented by CEOs/Board members from non-profit organizations and the private sector.

The Boards of CCOG and CRCOG will serve as the final vetting group for review of recommendations or policy matters affecting local governments or suggesting state or federal policy change. This is a role they have undertaken in the past and that will enhance the acceptance of Consortium recommendations. They will have the opportunity to review, but, except to the extent that individual members of those Boards serve on the Policy Forum or Policy Council, will not be involved in decision-making regarding, any recommendations aimed primarily at the non-profit or private sectors. Those recommendations will be published through professional associations and Consortium members representing those entities on the Consortium. Each Consortium member understands and acknowledges that CCOG and CRCOG are assuming these roles solely for the benefit and convenience of all Consortium members and therefore, each Consortium member agrees not to hold either CCOG or CRCOG liable in any manner in such capacity.

The Consortium is expected to be a growing, evolving group, and it is hoped that additional organizations will wish to join and participate. Organizations requesting membership will be required to sign this

Consortium Agreement, and to participate in an orientation that addresses goals, operating principles (including the basics of collaborative process), functional organization, and the progress of the Consortium to date.

OPERATING PRINCIPLES:

The Consortium will strive to:

- Include all the diverse perspectives and populations in the region in its processes, including active public engagement in developing its deliverables;
- Operate in a collaborative manner, holding each other accountable for participation, outreach, and timely engagement;
- Be fully transparent and share the work of the Consortium with all parties to the Consortium Agreement and with the public using a variety of communications tools;
- Be open to all interested organizations, local governments, and private entities that are willing to adopt the Consortium Agreement and participate in orientation as described above, including by the following:
 - State agency representatives will have voice; and
 - Private-sector representatives will have voice on matters in which they have no financial interest; and
- Operate by consensus using best-practice collaborative process, with the option of seeking conflict resolution through the CONNECT Council.

To facilitate the success of these operating principles, Consortium members at both the Program and Policy Forums will be expected to participate in 80% of the their group's meetings.

DEFINITIONS:

CONNECT Region: 14 Counties in North and South Carolina, including Anson, Cabarrus, Cleveland, Gaston, Iredell, Lincoln, Mecklenburg, Rowan, Stanly and Union in North Carolina, and Chester, Lancaster, Union, and York in South Carolina.

CONNECT Vision: A definition of the values and exploration of potential policies that the CONNECT Region has selected to guide its future through adoption by local resolution. The Vision, including CONNECT Core Values and a proposed Action Agenda, were adopted by local governments representing over 70% of the region's population in the period 2008 through 2010.

CONNECT Core Values: Six values selected by the CONNECT Vision Task Force from among over 100 goals and values identified by an independent consultant as being shared by local governments in the CONNECT region, based on a review of their adopted public policy documents in 2006-2007. The Core Values are:

- **A Strong, Diverse Economy** that supports a wide variety of businesses and enterprises throughout the region;

- **Sustainable, Well-Managed Growth** that maintains quality of life, protects open space and environmental quality, retains the natural character of the region, and maximizes the efficiency of infrastructure investments;
- **A Safe and Healthy Environment** with good air and water quality;
- **High-Quality Educational Opportunities** that are available to all residents;
- **Enhanced Social Equity** through community leadership and cooperative volunteerism; and
- **Increased Collaboration Among Jurisdictions** on issues that transcend boundaries, including growth management, transportation, and environmental concerns, in a manner that recognizes both regional and local needs.

National Sustainable Communities Learning Network: The National Sustainable Communities Learning Network is a collaboration of HUD with multiple national organizations engaged in all aspects of regional and local planning and under contract with HUD to help regional and local grantees and their Consortium members build their capacity for using “best practices” for any aspects of work in which they are interested through webinars, publications, and workshops.

Preferred Sustainability Status Bonus Points: Preferred Sustainability Status (PSS) is recognition conferred on HUD Program grantees and other non-grantees who have met certain thresholds, based on their work. As a PSS-recognized grantee, CCOG is allowed to certify that those who are applying for certain HUD grants are eligible for 2 PSS Bonus Points provided that: They are members of the CONNECT Consortium, they have completed a HUD Form 2995 and submitted a synopsis of their project, and that the synopsis demonstrates consistency with HUD’s Livability Principles as found in Program guidance and the CONNECT project’s objectives. In highly-competitive application processes, 2 points can make the difference between a grant being awarded or not. Other Federal agencies have indicated that Consortium membership may be considered in their grant review process.

Regional Preferred Development Scenario: A generalized pattern for accommodating projected growth in population and jobs, selected by consensus through extensive public and leadership engagement, that produces consensus desired performance outcomes (such as, potentially vibrant downtowns or close job access).

Blueprinting Process: A process by which alternative scenarios for growth are explored by the public and evaluated through modeling to determine which development patterns produce the long-term results that communities want and a foundation for community and regional efficiencies in infrastructure planning.

Exhibit B



MECKLENBURG COUNTY Office of the County Manager

September 26, 2011

Jim Prosser, Executive Director
Centralina Council of Governments
525 North Tryon Street, 12th Floor
Charlotte, North Carolina 28202

Dear Jim,

Mecklenburg County strongly endorses Centralina Council of Governments and Catawba Regional Council of Governments' application for Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant funding. We understand that Centralina is the lead applicant for this project.

Mecklenburg County is a member of the HUD Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant Consortium, which together with Centralina and 50 other jurisdictions, have adopted the CONNECT Regional Vision Core Values and Action Agenda, which is based on HUD's six Livability Principles.

The Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant will enable the Consortium to translate its Action Agenda into a fully integrated regional plan to guide development and future growth. Mecklenburg County alone has grown more than 28% over the past decade (U.S. 2010 Census, QuickFacts), and we expect continued growth.

Mecklenburg County is committed to the regional vision, which will engage our diverse population more fully in planning and implementation, create more transportation choices, enhance social equity through improved housing, education and job development, including access to healthy foods and quality health care.

As part of this commitment, we plan to play an active role in developing air and water quality benchmarks using our GIS spatial tools and mapping capacity. Mecklenburg County is fortunate in having staff expertise and resources that are frequently shared with other local governments throughout the region. This grant affords the opportunity to enhance our systems and continue our service and leadership in the region.

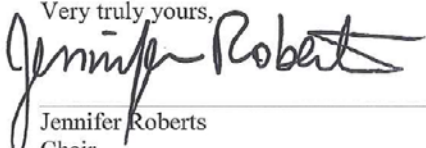
We further commit that the staff time we devote to this project may be considered as in-kind match for the Planning Grant. We have calculated the value of our personnel match as \$70,569, which includes the time and fringe benefits (@ 33%) of 2 supervisors, 4 line staff positions, and 1 Public Health consultant, as follows:

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| | |
|---|-------------------|
| 2 supervisors @ .03 (\$133,000 p.a.) x 2 = \$7,980 x 3 years | = \$23,940 |
| 4 line staff* @ .05 (\$74,000 p.a.) x 4 = \$14,800 x 3 years | = \$44,400 |
| 1 Public Health consultant** @ .012 (\$101,343 per annum) x 1 year and .005 (\$101,343 p.a.) for 2 years | = <u>\$ 2,229</u> |
| TOTAL: | \$70,569 |

* 1 Air Quality Specialist, 1 Water Quality Specialist, 1 Environmental Program Manager, 1 GIS technician, and;
 **1 Public Health consultant for health data analysis and integration into the blueprinting process in year one followed by periodic analysis and reporting in years two and three.

We also agree to cover associated overhead costs and provide meeting space at 8 Park and Recreation facilities listed on the County's website (<http://charneck.org/mecklenburg/county/ParkandRec/Facilities/Reservable/Pages/Indoor.aspx>). Assuming 20 community meetings in all at an average weekday rate of \$195.75 per facility, the County's match for meeting space is \$3,915 over the 3-year grant period. The value of the County's total in-kind match is \$74,484, including staff time and meeting space. We look forward to an active partnership as a Consortium member in the Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant, and strongly encourage the US Department of Housing and Urban Development's funding of this proposal. Our intention is to formalize our participation as a Consortium member within 120 days of grant approval.

Very truly yours,


 Jennifer Roberts
 Chair
 Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners
9/28/11
 (date)



 Harry L. Jones, Sr.
 County Manager
 Mecklenburg County
9/26/11
 (date)

RESOLUTION

IN SUPPORT OF THE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES REGIONAL PLANNING GRANT

WHEREAS, the Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant Program (Program) is a new program of the federal partnership of the Department of Housing & Urban Development, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the U.S. Department of Transportation, and is designed to promote greater regional sustainability, livability and efficiencies by breaking down barriers to governmental and private/non-profit collaboration among regional jurisdictions, most notably by linking housing, transportation, economic development, and the environment; and

WHEREAS, the Centralina Council of Governments (CCOG) has taken the lead in facilitating a joint effort for the Charlotte metropolitan region that would lead to a n application for federal funds under the Program; and

WHEREAS, the Program's foundation is based on six Livability Principles intended to promote sustainability and are closely linked to the CONNECT Regional Vision Core Values and Action Agenda adopted by Mecklenburg County on January 21, 2009; and

WHEREAS, both the Livability Principles and the CONNECT action Agenda call for the provision of sustainable and well-managed growth, more transportation choices, enhanced social equity through housing and other means, and more economic opportunity for all residents of the region; and

WHEREAS, the Sustainable Communities Regional Planning grant will provide tools to regional partners, including Mecklenburg County, to enable broader and deeper engagement n these principles and values, giving them an implementable foundation and geographic base; and

WHEREAS, work associated with the grant will provide a strong platform for the preparation of MUMPO's next Long Range Transportation plan (LRTP) and will directly benefit the County in its inter-jurisdictional planning and coordination efforts; and

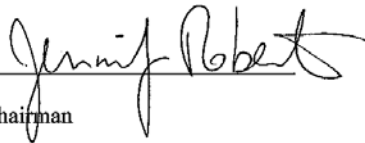
WHEREAS, Mecklenburg County's participation in the consortium for the Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant will afford the entire Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) opportunities to better align their own housing, land use, transportation, water infrastructure, economic development, and environmental plans; and

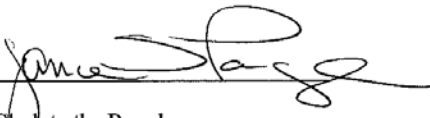
WHEREAS, Mecklenburg County's participation in, and successful completion of the Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant in 2010 afforded the County "Preferred Sustainability Status" by the federal partnership such that in applying for funding for certain HUD grants, the County's applications receive 2 bonus points;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Mecklenburg County supports the submission to HUD of a Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant application, with CCOG as lead applicant, and agrees as a member of the CONNECT Consortium (consortium agreement to be negotiated within 120 days of grant award) to participate in planning activities relevant to the geography of the County; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Mecklenburg County agrees that staff technical assistance on sustainability matters of concern to the County and the Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant, may be considered as in-kind match on the grant, as mutually agreed by the County and the CCOG.

Adopted this 12th day of JULY 2011.


Chairman


Clerk to the Board