

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 26, 2013

Graham County promotes smart growth implementation principles at strategy workshop

CONTACT: Alex Dodds, 202-679-6816, adodds@smartgrowthamerica.org
Melissa McKnight, 828-587-8291, mmcknight.region1ctg@gmail.com

Graham County, NC —Graham County officials and local residents will meet with representatives from Smart Growth America on April 2 and 3, 2013 as part of a free, grant-funded technical assistance program. The workshops aim to find innovative strategies for improving the county's safety, health and economy through the development of a resident led action plan for future growth.

"We in Western North Carolina are excited about working with Smart Growth America," said Melissa McKnight Intervention Lead at the Graham County Health Department. "We hope to learn about the intersection between public health and planning, how to implement smart growth principles into our rural communities, and how to break down silos to ensure that we move the work forward together."

Graham County residents are invited to join the workshop's first day for an introductory presentation that will feature smart growth stories from across the country. The event will be held Tuesday, April 2, 2013 from 4:00–6:00 PM at the Healthful Living Center at Robbinsville High School, 301 Sweetwater Road, Robbinsville, NC, 28771.

"Smart Growth America is committed to providing training to help community leaders keep their cities and towns livable, sustainable and vital places," said Roger Millar, Director of Smart Growth America's Leadership Institute. "Graham County has a unique opportunity to engage its residents and local leaders in creating an action plan that will aid in the development of the county's overall economy, safety and health. This workshop will give the County the tools to effectively apply smart growth principles to their efforts to shape the future the citizens of the County want."

In November 2012, Graham County was one of 22 communities selected by Smart Growth America to participate in the free technical assistance program. Stretching from Maine to Washington State, these communities represent major cities, suburban centers, and rural towns alike.

The program, made possible through a five-year Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Sustainable Communities, seeks to develop local planning solutions that help communities grow in ways that benefit families and businesses, while protecting the environment and preserving a sense of place. Three other nonprofit organizations—Forterra, Global Green USA and Project for Public Spaces—also received competitively awarded grants under this program to help communities get the kinds of development they want.

As a national leader in the field, Smart Growth America has accumulated extensive experience working with communities to help them use land strategically, make the most of existing resources

and invest strategically to catalyze private development.

Smart Growth America is the only national organization dedicated to researching, advocating for and leading coalitions to bring smart growth practices to more communities nationwide. From providing more sidewalks to ensuring more homes are built near public transportation or that productive farms remain a part of our communities, smart growth helps make sure people across the nation can live in great neighborhoods. For additional information visit www.smartgrowthamerica.org.

#