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CONNECT our FUTURE



Gaston County

Community Growth Workshops
Participant Guide




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Vibrant Communities—Robust Region



The 14-county bi-state region includes: Anson, Cabarrus, Cleveland, Gaston, Iredell, Lincoln, Mecklenburg, Rowan, Stanly and Union Counties in North Carolina, and Chester, Lancaster, Union and York Counties in South Carolina.

Community Growth Workshops Participant Guide

“CONNECT Our Future” is a process in which communities, counties, businesses, educators, non-profits and other organizations work together to grow jobs and the economy, improve quality of life and control the cost of government. This project will create a regional growth framework developed through extensive community engagement and built on what communities identify as existing conditions, future plans and needs, and potential strategies.

The work that provided the basis for this publication was supported by funding under an award with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The substance and findings of the work are dedicated to the public. The author and publisher are solely responsible for the accuracy of the statements and interpretations contained in this publication. Such interpretations do not necessarily reflect the views of the Government.

This document was prepared by Centralina Council of Governments and Catawba Regional Council of Governments in partnership with the Seven Hills Planning Group, Inc., and the Design and Society Research Center at the University of North Carolina Charlotte.

Preface

The Community Growth Workshops Participant Guide for CONNECT Our Future provides background information for attending one of the forty-eight scheduled Community Growth Workshops. It includes a brief description of the participant's task, and general information for completing the hands-on workshop exercise. We look forward to seeing you soon!

Acknowledgments

Preparation of the Community Growth Workshops Participant Guide to support CONNECT Our Future was a collaborative process including the Centralina Council of Governments, Catawba Regional Council of Governments, Lee Institute, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, and Seven Hills Town Planning Group, Inc. All of their efforts are greatly appreciated.

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Introduction

CONNECT Our Future is a three-year program (2012 – 2014) aimed at bringing together communities, counties, states, businesses, educators, non-profit organizations and the general public across fourteen counties in North and South Carolina to develop a shared, long-term vision for the future of the region. It builds on the CONNECT Vision completed in 2008, and continues the region's focus on well-managed growth, a safe and healthy environment, a strong diverse economy, high quality education opportunities, enhanced social equity, and increased collaboration among jurisdictions. The program is supported by a \$4.9 million HUD Sustainable Communities Grant and \$3.0 million in local public and private resources.

A series of forty-eight Community Growth Workshops will be used to gather local input on possible future growth and development within each of the regional CONNECT counties. They build on earlier public engagement opportunities, described on pages 50 through 53 and will contribute to the development of four to five regional "Alternative Growth Scenarios" that will be released for public comment in late spring of 2014.

At the workshops, participants will work in groups of 8 to 10 people to consider growth in their county over the next 40 years. They will identify where people should work, live, and play in the region, and how to enhance and protect quality of life as their county continues to grow. The exercise allows participants to experience the real world challenges that come with growth and allows them to express their vision for development or conservation inside the county.

Workshop participants will place chips on a map of their county that represent a variety of development options, and draw proposed conservation areas and/or infrastructure improvements to support their vision. They may also develop brief statements that address specific issues important for future growth such as access to jobs, open and recreational space, social equality, walkability, or affordable housing. At the end of the process, participants will present their maps to each other for discussion.

Other resource documents that will support the CONNECT Our Future process are available on the project's website (www.ConnectOurFuture.org).

CONNECT Region

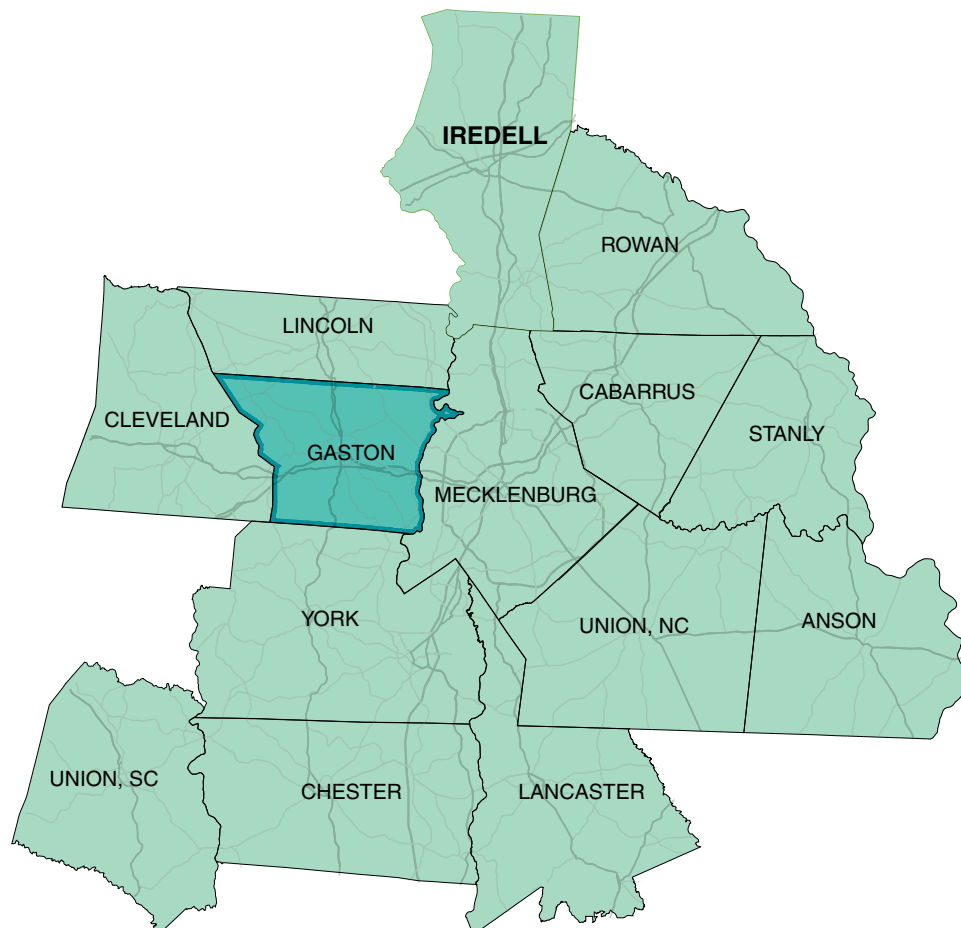
The CONNECT Region is expansive, covering 7,200 square miles and 1.2 million parcels of real estate, two states and fourteen counties. It includes 119 units of local government and countless special districts such as fire districts, school districts, soil and water conservation districts, transportation divisions, etc. Cities and towns in the region range from large metropolitan centers to rural crossroads. Environmental features such as water basins, prime agricultural soils, and air quality, bind the region together and blur city, county, and state boundaries.

The region is home to the world headquarters for eight Fortune 500 companies, as well as other major employers in medical, manufacturing, energy, financial and transportation business sectors.¹ Over half of the region's workforce lives in one county and works in another, which reinforces the need for more coordinated decision-making processes in housing, transportation, economic development, and other supporting infrastructure.²

Together, the CONNECT Region represents a land area larger than the State of Connecticut and a population greater than fifteen US states

(Source: US Census Bureau, 2010).

Map of the CONNECT Region (Gaston County Highlighted):



Gaston County-at-a-Glance

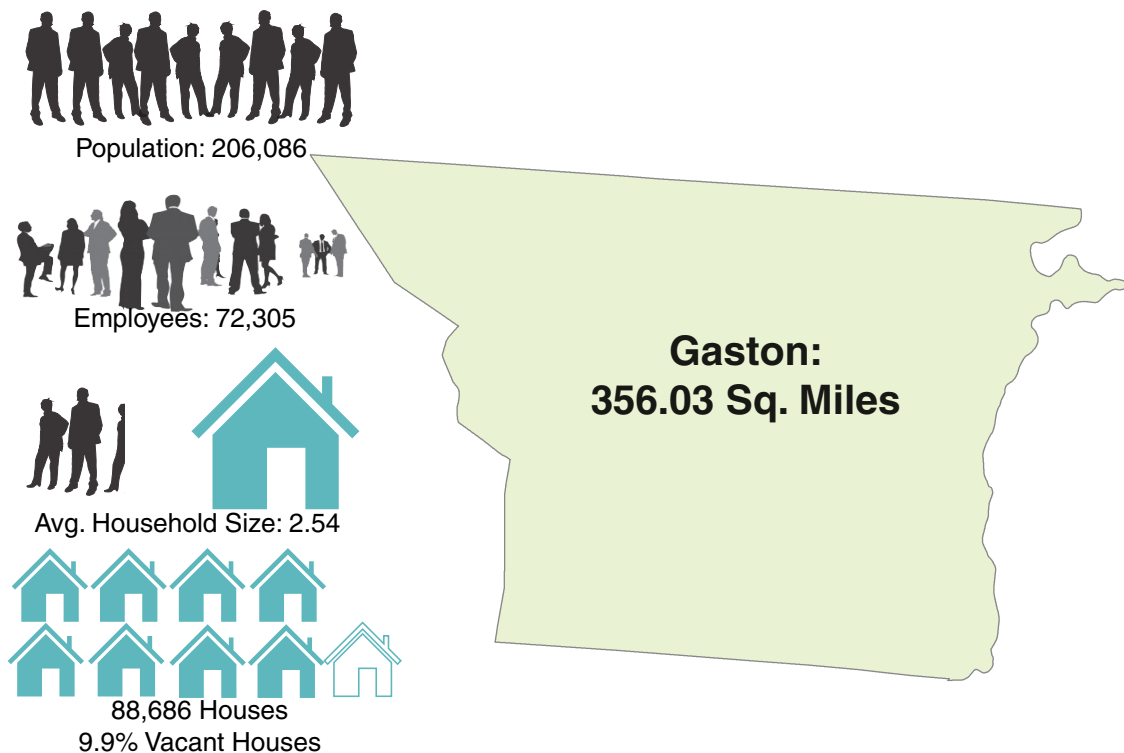
The Regional Scan Document for CONNECT Our Future, which is available from the CONNECT Our Future website (www.ConnectOurFuture.org), provides an overview of existing conditions and community features found throughout the CONNECT Region. It describes the region's people and their economy, and communicates how land is organized, used, and supported by public facilities and services. The overview captures existing regional trends that may influence future growth and development, while acknowledging the desires of towns, cities, and counties to retain their unique characteristics.

A summary of information presented in the Regional Scan Document for Gaston County follows in the graphics below and on the next page.

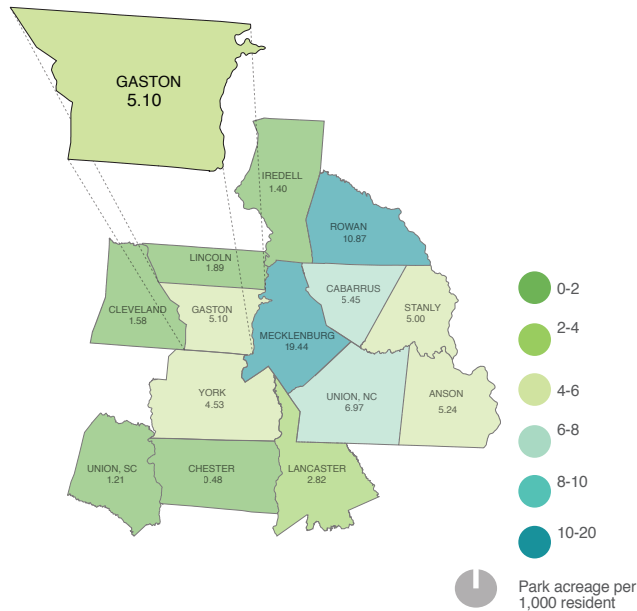
Gaston County Population and Employment Growth and Trends:

COUNTY	POPULATION			EMPLOYMENT		
	2000	2010	2050	2000	2010	2050
ANSON, NC	25,275	26,900	33,300	10,900	10,100	11,200
CABARRUS, NC	131,063	178,000	413,500	58,000	69,595	157,453
CHESTER, SC	34,068	33,100	41,900	16,100	12,000	11,800
CLEVELAND, NC	96,287	98,100	137,400	46,900	42,000	48,300
GASTON, NC	190,365	206,100	295,100	69,900	92,700	117,780
IREDELL, NC	122,660	159,400	276,700	70,400	79,700	129,700
LANCASTER, SC	61,351	76,700	119,800	26,100	26,300	32,400
LINCOLN, NC	63,780	78,300	138,400	20,200	25,200	38,600
MECKLENBURG, NC	695,454	919,600	1,687,000	529,700	692,900	1,213,300
ROWAN, NC	130,340	138,400	184,500	49,600	53,500	67,013
STANLY, NC	58,100	60,600	88,200	19,000	25,500	42,709
UNION, NC	123,677	201,300	384,400	44,000	74,100	130,800
UNION, SC	29,881	29,000	31,100	12,800	9,200	8,900
YORK, SC	164,614	226,100	409,700	61,700	101,200	167,400
REGION	1,926,915	2,431,600	4,241,000	1,035,300	1,313,995	2,177,355
DELTA		504,685	1,809,400		278,695	863,360
% INCREASE		26%	74%		27%	66%

Gaston County Quick Facts:



Map of the CONNECT Region's Parkland in Acres per 1000 people:



Gaston County School Enrollment Statistics:

SCHOOL DISTRICT	GRADES	# OF SCHOOLS	2013 ENROLLMENT
ANSON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT	K - 12	11	3,755
CABARRUS COUNTY SCHOOLS	PK - 12	38	28,465
CHARLOTTE - MECKLENBURG SCHOOLS	PK - 12	158	128,186
CLEVELAND COUNTY SCHOOLS	PK - 12	29	15,721
GASTON COUNTY SCHOOLS	PK - 12	55	30,900
IREDELL - STATESVILLE SCHOOLS	PK - 12	36	21,130
KANNAPOLIS CITY SCHOOLS	PK - 12	8	5,119
LINCOLN COUNTY SCHOOLS	PK - 12	24	11,674
MOORESVILLE GRADED SCHOOL DISTRICT	PK - 5 / 7 - 12	8	5,420
ROWAN - SALISBURY SCHOOL SYSTEM	PK - 12	35	20,002
STANLY COUNTY SCHOOLS	PK - 7 / 9 - 12	21	8,443
UNION COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS	PK - 12	52	39,040
CHESTER SCHOOL DISTRICT ONE	PK - 12	13	5,740
LANCASTER SCHOOL DISTRICT ONE	PK - 12	20	11,728
UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT ONE	K - 12	9	4,614
YORK SCHOOL DISTRICT ONE	PK - 12	8	5,286
YORK SCHOOL DISTRICT TWO	PK - 12	9	6,390
YORK SCHOOL DISTRICT THREE	PK - 12	28	17,650
YORK SCHOOL DISTRICT FOUR	PK - 12	10	9,441

Gaston County Agricultural Statistics:

COUNTY	TOTAL ACRES IN COUNTY	NO. OF FARMS	LAND IN FARMS (ACRES)	% LAND AREA IN FARMS	AVG. FARM SIZE (ACRES)	HARVESTED CROPLAND (ACRES)	AVERAGE AGE OF FARMER	RANK	TOTAL CASH RECEIPTS
ANSON, NC	340216	487	90770	27%	186	20065	58.9	19	\$149,914,627
CABARRUS, NC	231524	611	66780	29%	109	27912	57.4	63	\$33,629,863
CLEVELAND, NC	297120	1188	115637	39%	97	35365	58.9	38	\$88,112,636
CHESTER, SC	227856	516	37561	16%	73	11218	57.8	84	\$22,014,971
GASTON, NC	367488	1201	138416	38%	115	58052	57.7	27	\$127,380,423
IREDELL, NC	190683	638	59360	31%	93	25545	57.2	65	\$37,345,274
LANCASTER, SC	335216	236	19135	6%	81	6377	58.7	22	\$151,540,447
LINCOLN, NC	327141	983	115942	35%	118	55560	56.7	45	\$50,242,362
MECKLENBURG, NC	252836	713	104517	41%	147	49631	58.2	39	\$88,760,564
ROWAN, NC	404160	1107	178193	44%	161	109598	57.6	3	\$436,770,498
STANLY, NC	371622.4	544	111820	30%	206	N/A	58.7	26	\$30,492,000
UNION, NC	351462.4	573	65210	19%	114	N/A	58.4	15	\$67,998,000
UNION, SC	329068.8	262	45512	14%	174	N/A	60.3	45	\$3,219,000
YORK, SC	435584	1038	124176	29%	120	N/A	57.2	7	\$93,076,000
REGION	4461977.6	10097	1273029	29%	128		58		\$1,380,496,665

* For more information about crops and livestock produced in the CONNECT Region see page 55

(Source: USDA Census for Agriculture, State and County Profiles, 2007, www.agcensus.usda.gov/publications/2007/online_highlights/county_profiles/South_Carolina, July 14, 2013)

ULI Reality Check

On June 4, 2013, over 400 people from across the CONNECT Region participated in Reality Check 2050, a hands-on, interactive exercise hosted by the Urban Land Institute to contemplate growth and how to accommodate it. Red and yellow LEGO blocks were used to represent forecasted population and employment growth through 2050, and a work map and colored yarn let participants distribute growth and new infrastructure among 119 cities, towns, and counties in the CONNECT Region. Forty-one table top exercises were completed during the event, and real-time polling in the afternoon captured the group's general opinions on growth and development. Please see the project website at www.realitycheck2050.org for more information on the event.

A summary of information from the real-time polling exercise completed during Reality Check 2050 follows on pages 8 through 11. Sample “development themes” that emerged during the event and their characteristics are presented on pages 44 through 45.



(Source: Photo Courtesy of Urban Land Institute)

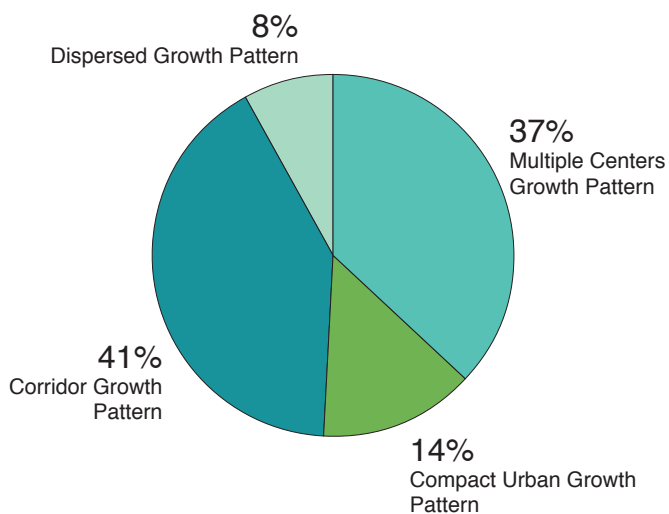
Polling results - Future Regional Goals:



Polling results - Important Guiding Principles:

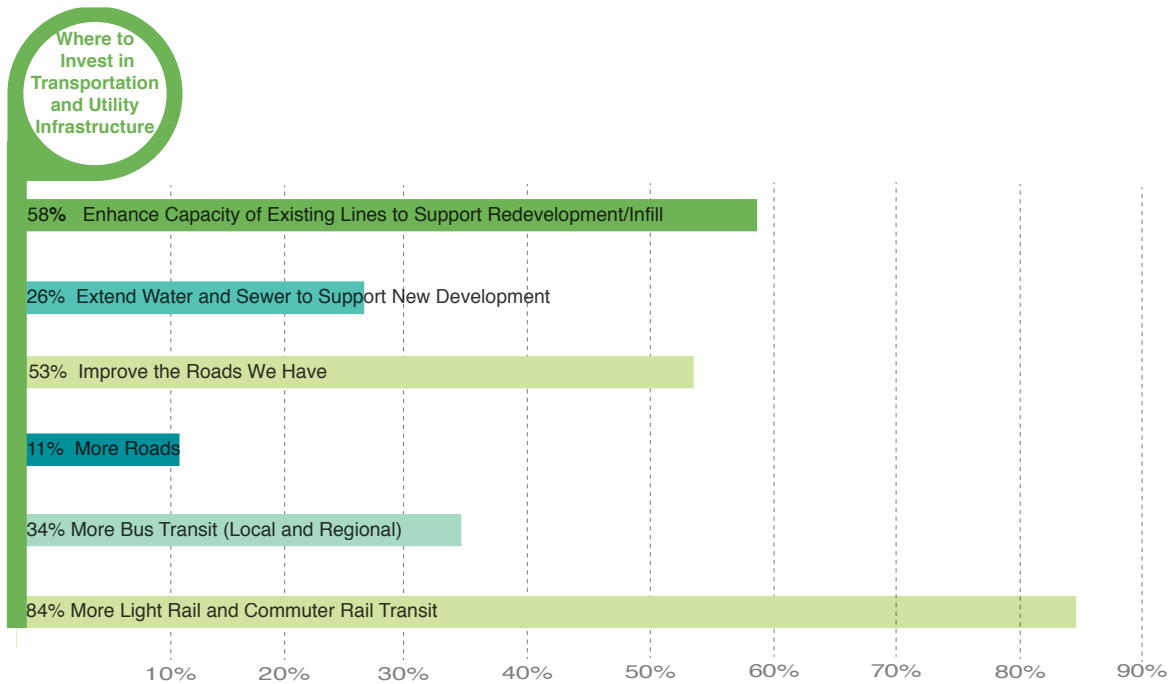


Polling results - Themes Aligning With Important guiding Principles:

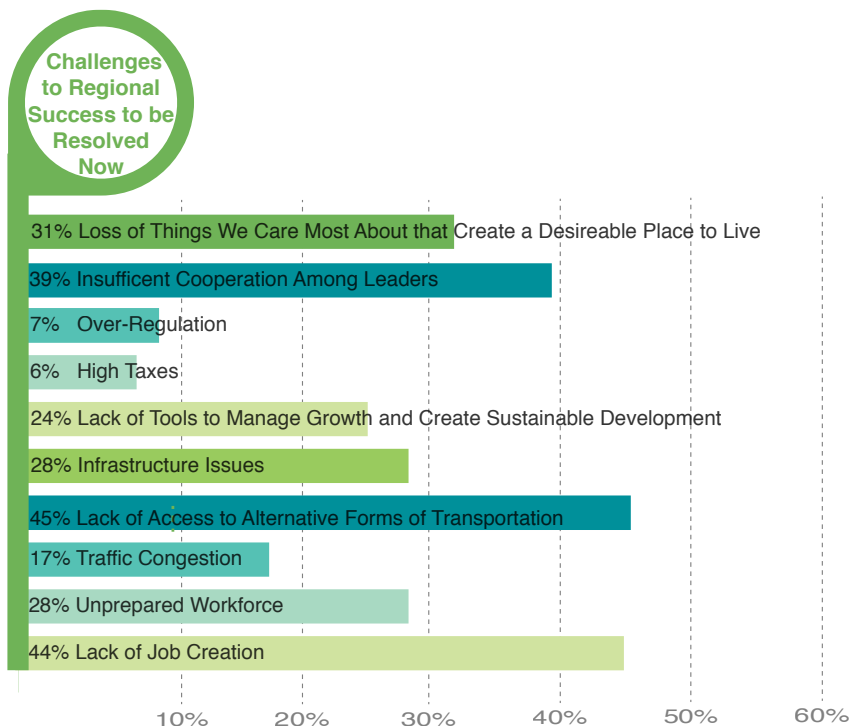


(Source: Photo Courtesy of Urban Land Institute)

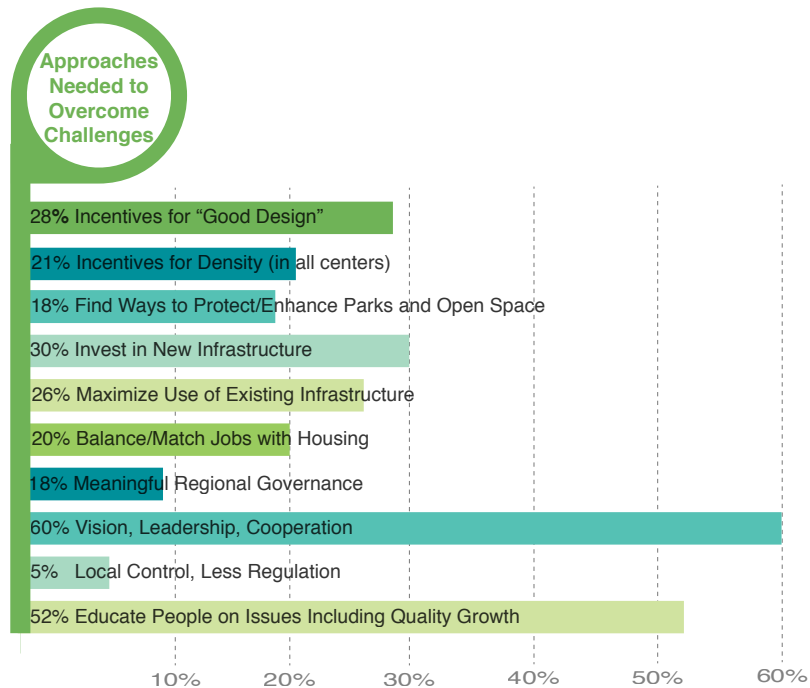
Polling results - Where to Invest in Transportation and Utility Infrastructure:



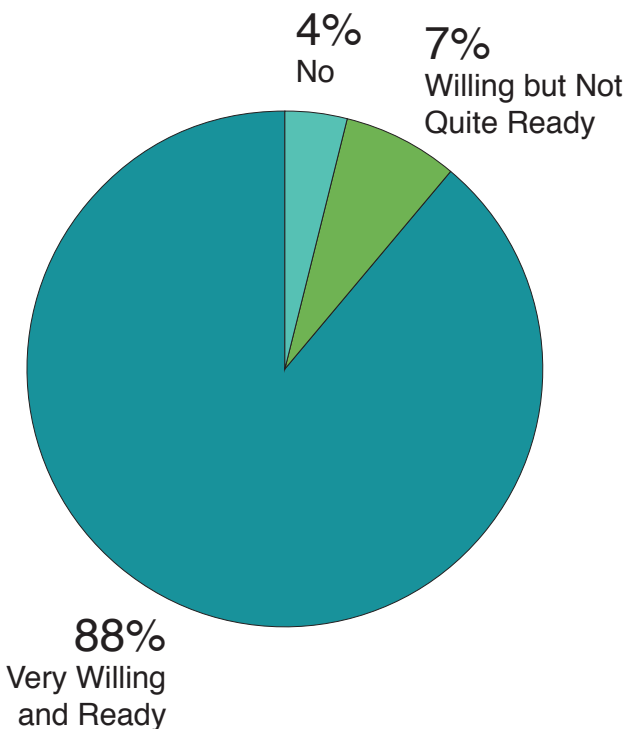
Polling results - Challenges to Regional Success to be Resolved Now:



Polling results - Approaches Needed to Overcome Challenges:



Polling results - Willingness to Address These Challenges:



(Source: Photo Courtesy of Urban Land Institute)

How to Play the Game:





Developing Chip Game Group Assignment

Participants will work in groups of 8 to 10 people to consider growth in their county over the next 40 years. They will identify where people should work, live, and play in the region, and how to enhance and protect quality of life as their county continues to grow. Each table will be provided resource maps, a development chip set, markers, and a work map. A facilitator will be available at each table to answer questions.

Information from the events will be synthesized by the CONNECT Our Future model development team into maps showing “areas of general consensus”, “areas of general consensus, but work out the details”, and “areas for further discussion” based on information from all the work maps collected at each workshop. The type, placement, and organization of chips on the work maps will also be captured to create a region-wide “Citizens’ Growth Scenario” as one of the alternative future growth scenarios evaluated later in the scenario planning process.

It is important to note that existing, and potentially future, land ownership and land development factors may prohibit some elements of the groups’ vision from becoming reality. However, for the purposes of this exercise participants may decide where and how areas could be defined and mapped for growth assuming an unconstrained condition.

Work Map

The work map is the only mechanism for communicating the group’s vision for their area of the CONNECT Region. Please write, label, draw, or sketch all ideas on the map or in the margins. Information on the work map should be clear and concise so that the CONNECT Our Future project team can easily interpret the group’s ideas when they collect the maps at the end of the game.

A work map for Gaston County and its immediate surroundings is provided to the right for study prior to the workshop event.

Legend

 Open Space	 Suburban Multifamily Neighborhood	 Transit Activity Center
 Working Farm	 Suburban Commercial Center	 Urban Center
 Rural Living	 Suburban Office Center	 Metropolitan Center
 Industrial Center	 Walkable Neighborhood	 Special District
 Suburban Single Family Neighborhood	 Walkable Activity Center	
 Water Bodies	 County Boundaries	 Interstate

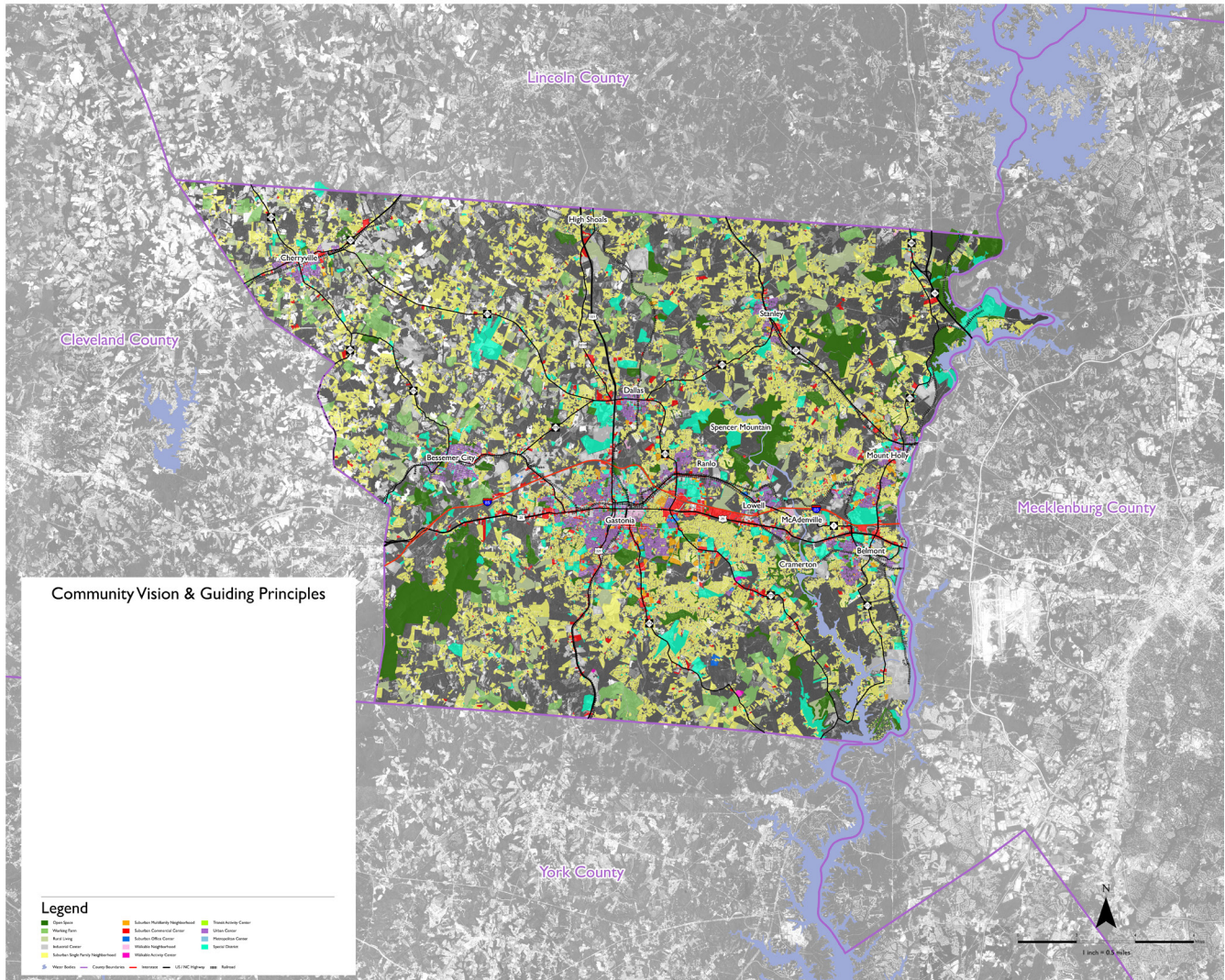
Gaston County Work Map:

CONNECT Our Future Scenario Planning Initiative

Development Chip Game Work Map

Event: _____

Table No. _____



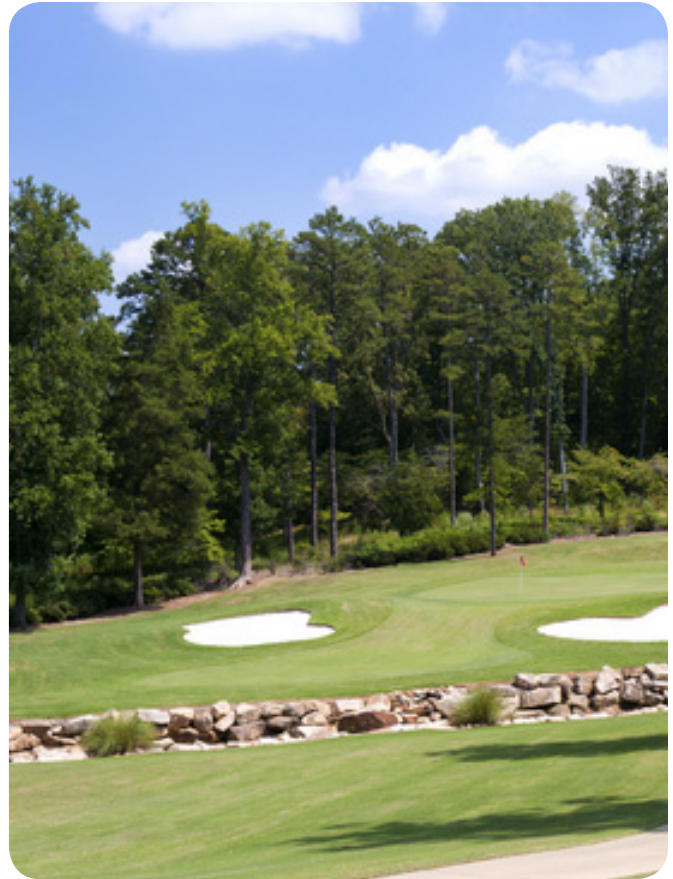
Community Type Descriptions

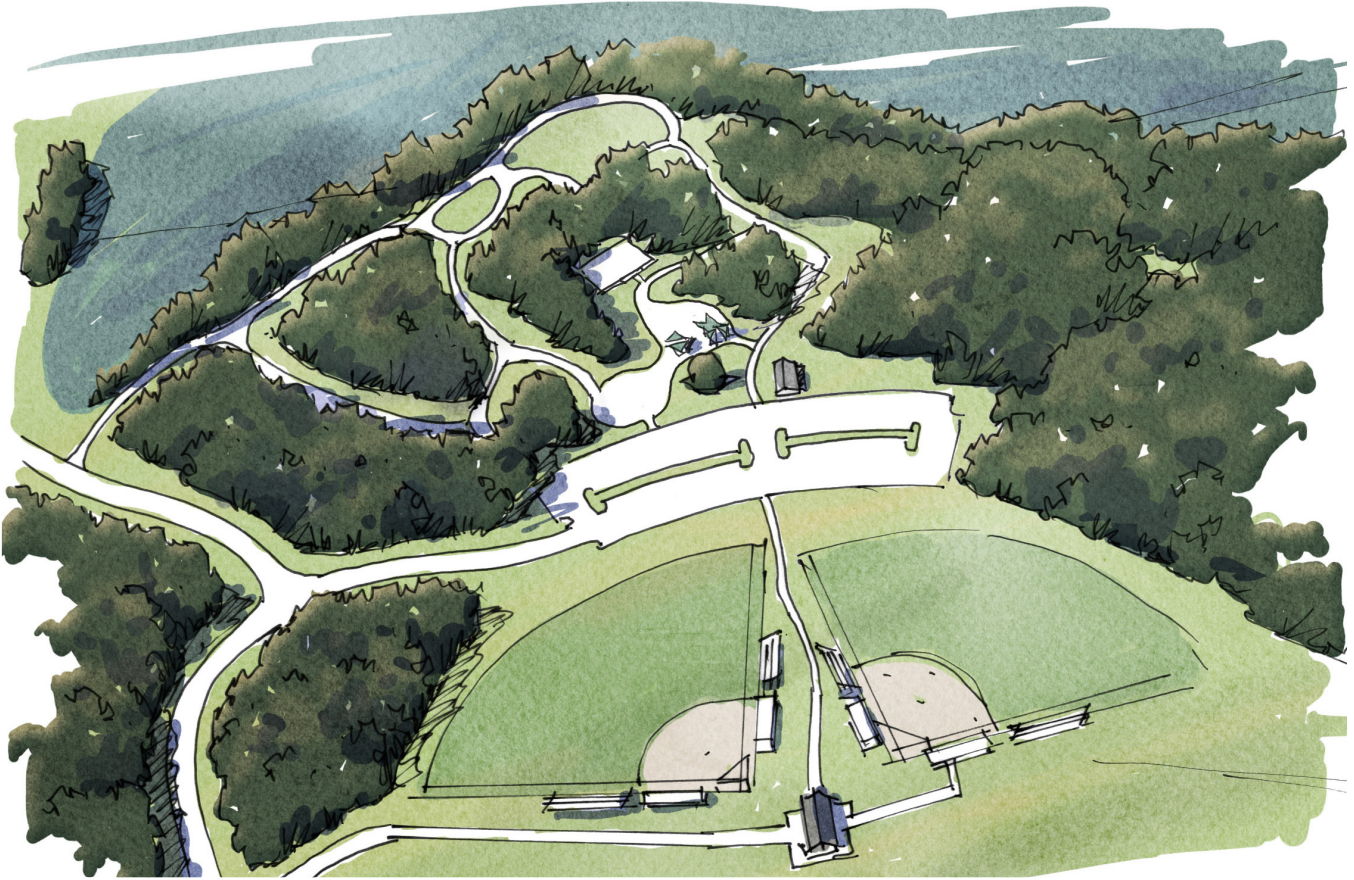
Community types are general development categories that will be used to represent the groups' vision of future growth within their county for CONNECT Our Future. Each community type is a compilation of one or more detailed place type categories described in the CONNECT Our Future Place Type Summary Document, which may be found on the CONNECT Our Future website (www.ConnectOurFuture.org). Brief descriptions of the thirteen community types used for CONNECT Our Future follows.

Open Space

Open space includes land dedicated for active and passive conservation and recreation. These areas are typically undisturbed or undeveloped and have been protected from development by local, state, and federal agencies or by public, private, and nonprofit organizations. In the CONNECT Region, these areas include national parks, state parks, community parks, greenways, athletic fields, cemeteries, land held in permanent conservation, land protected by municipal regulations (e.g., stream buffers or floodplains), and dedicated open space in residential neighborhoods.

The 'open space' community type is identified on the work map to capture existing conditions in the region; however, it will not be a chip played during the development chip game. Participants may use the black marker to identify proposed areas in the region that they feel should be set aside as Open Space (see the Work Schedule Section in the participant guide).



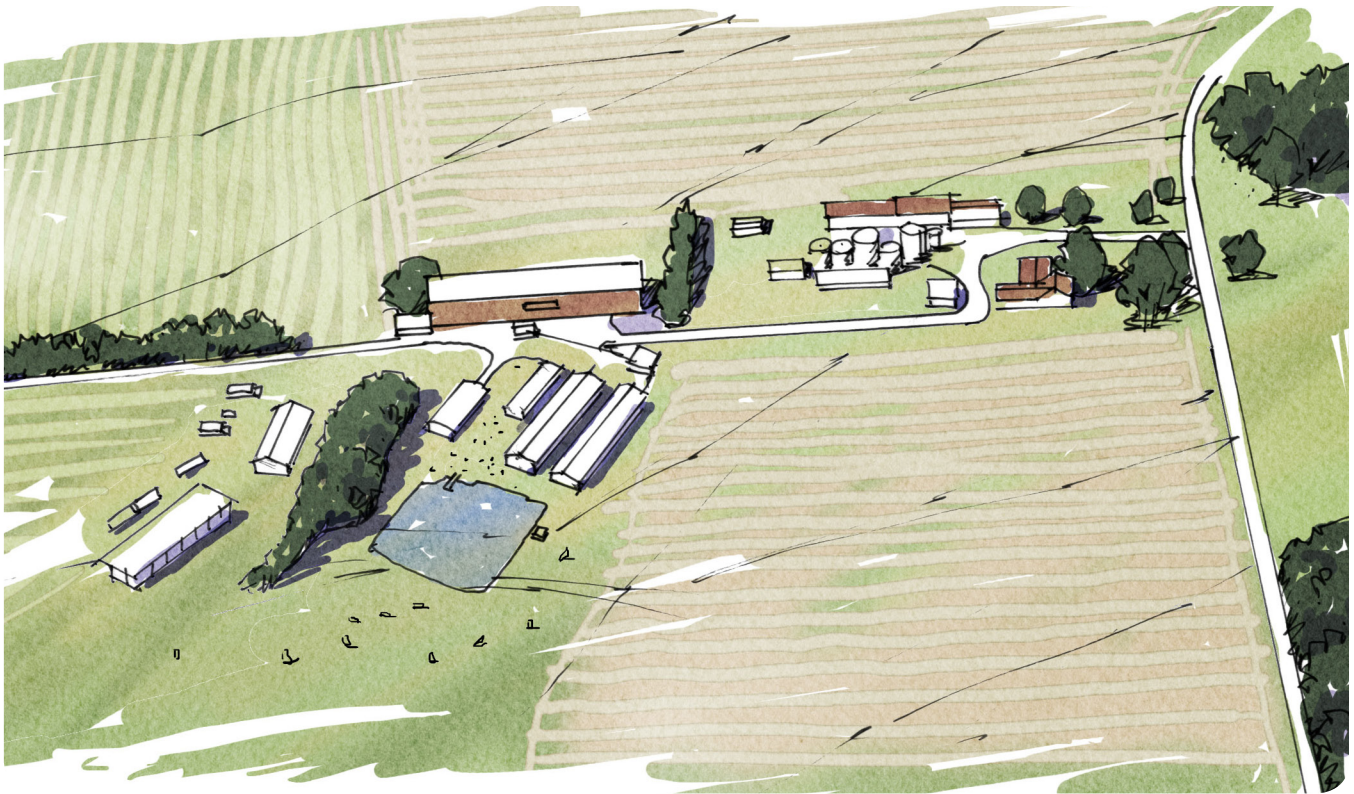


Working Farms

Working farms are actively being used for agriculture or forestry activities, including cultivated farmland, timber harvest, livestock, and woodlands. These areas also support the primary residence of the property owner and any out-buildings associated with activities on the working farm.

The ‘working farm’ community type is identified on the work map to capture existing conditions in the region; however, it will not be a chip played during the development chip game. Participants may use the black marker to identify proposed areas in the region that they feel should be set aside as Working Farms (see the Work Schedule Section in the participant guide).





Rural Living

Rural living areas are typically characterized by large lots, abundant open space and a high degree of separation between buildings. Large acreage, rural family homes and “hobby farms” are scattered throughout the countryside and often integrated into the landscape. The lot size and distance between dwelling units decrease with greater development densities.

Conservation-based subdivisions in some areas of the region cluster development and leave large areas for permanent open space and uninterrupted views. Small nodes of commercial activity such as gas stations, convenience stores, or restaurants are concentrated at rural crossroads, serving some daily needs of the surrounding rural population.



Community Type
Game Chip: See
Page 46

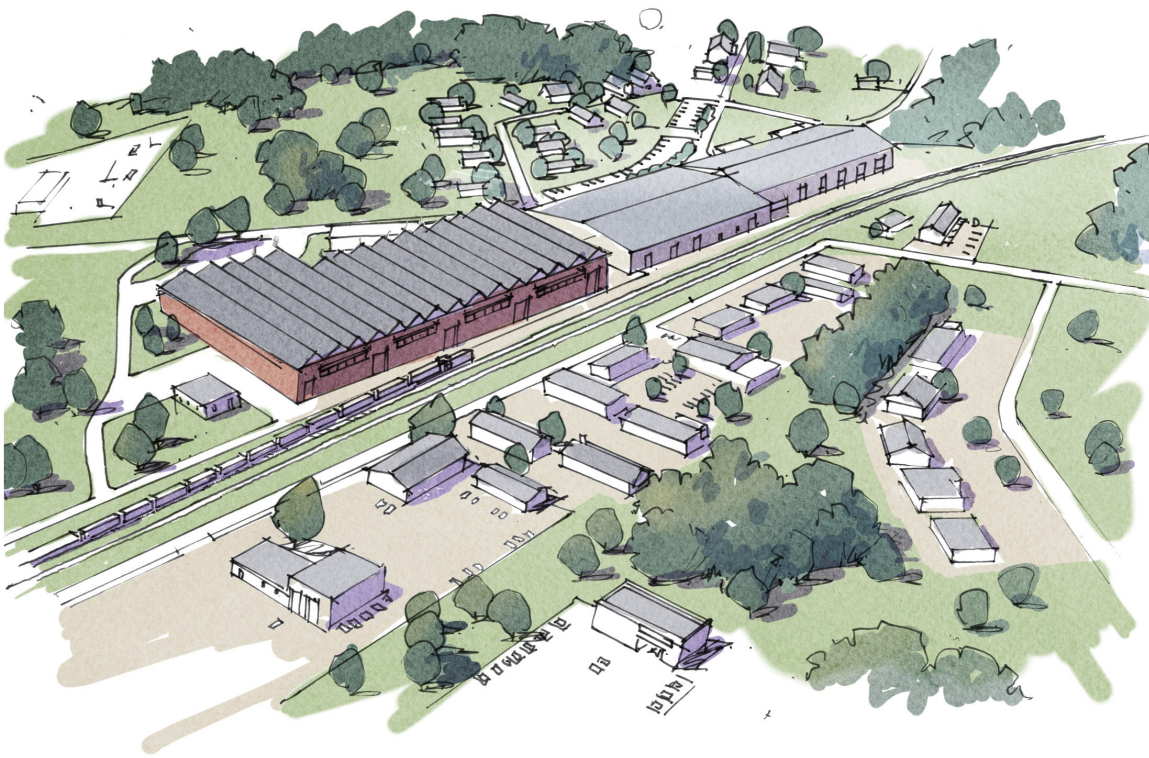


Industrial Center

Industrial centers concentrate manufacturing and production employment in the region, including warehousing, light manufacturing, medical research, and assembly operations. Heavy industrial sites may require larger sites because activities are not confined entirely to buildings. Conveyor belts, holding tanks, smoke stacks, or outdoor storage all may be present in a heavy industrial center.

Development is usually found in close proximity to major transportation corridors, such as highway or rail, and is generally buffered from surrounding development by transitional uses or landscaped areas that shield the view of structures, loading docks, or outdoor storage from adjacent properties. Clusters of industrial uses that support or serve one another are often located in the same industrial center.





Suburban Single Family Neighborhoods

Suburban single-family neighborhoods are formed as subdivisions or communities, with a relatively uniform housing type and density throughout. They may support a variety of single-family detached residential types, from mobile homes to large-lot, low-density single-family homes to denser formats of smaller single-family homes. Homes are oriented interior to the neighborhood and typically buffered from surrounding development by transitional uses or landscaped areas.

Suburban single-family neighborhoods are often found in close proximity to suburban commercial, office, and industrial centers, and help provide the consumers needed to support these centers.





Suburban Multi-Family Neighborhood

Suburban multifamily neighborhoods are generally formed as complexes or communities, with a relatively uniform housing type and density throughout. They support the highest residential density in the suburban landscape, and may contain one of the following housing types: condominiums, townhomes, senior housing, or apartments.

Suburban multifamily neighborhoods are found in close proximity to suburban commercial, office, and industrial centers, and help provide the consumers needed to support these centers. Buildings are oriented interior to the site and typically buffered from surrounding development by transitional uses or landscaped areas. Large parking lots and low street connectivity are common in suburban multifamily neighborhoods.

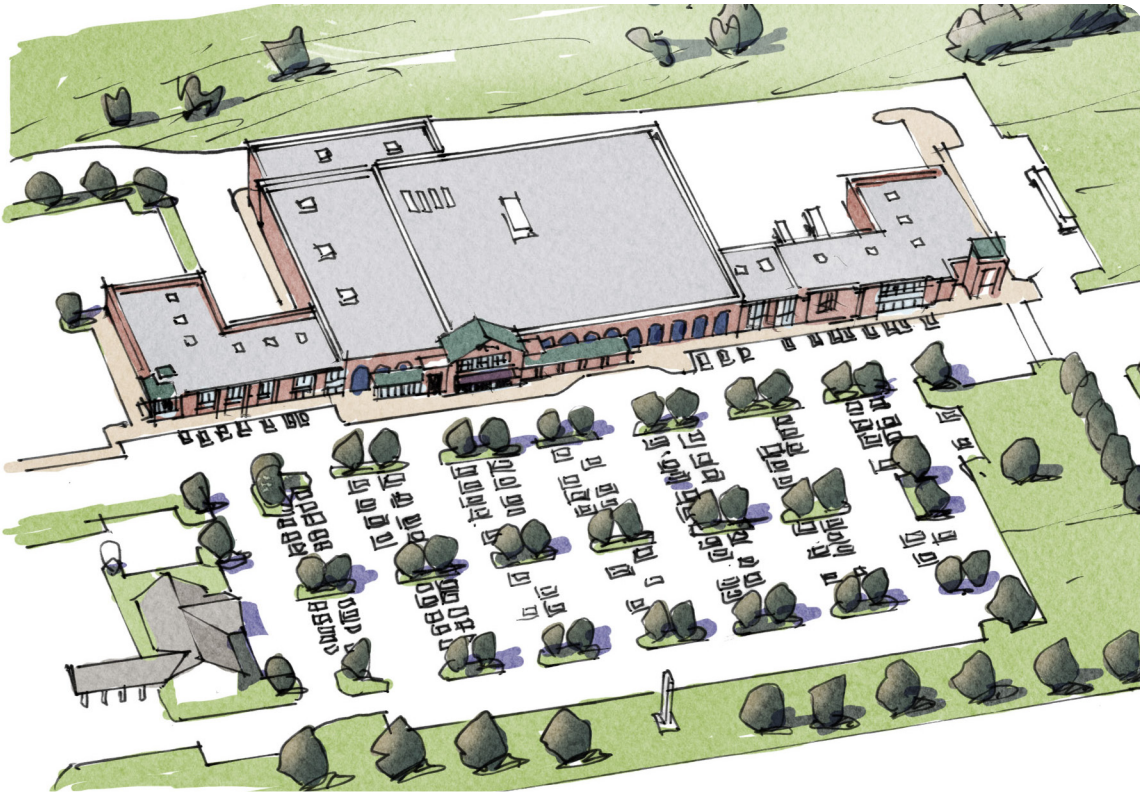




Suburban Commercial Centers

Suburban commercial centers serve the daily needs of surrounding residential neighborhoods. They typically locate near high-volume roads and key intersections, and are designed to be accessible primarily by automobile. Buildings are set back from the road behind large surface parking lots, with little connectivity between adjacent businesses. Common types of suburban centers in the region include multi-tenant strip centers, big box stores, small outparcels with a drive-through, and large shopping malls.





Suburban Office Centers

Suburban office centers provide opportunities to concentrate employment in the region. They include both large-scale isolated buildings with numerous employees as well as areas containing multiple office uses that support and serve one another. They are typically buffered from surrounding development by transitional uses or landscaped areas and are often located in close proximity to major highways or thoroughfares.





Walkable Neighborhood

A walkable neighborhood offers residents the ability to live, shop, work, and play in one community. These neighborhoods include a mixture of housing types and residential densities integrated with goods and services in a walkable environment that residents visit on a daily basis. The design and scale of the development encourages active living through a comprehensive and interconnected network of walkable streets. Mixed-use neighborhoods support multiple modes of transportation.





Walkable Center

Walkable activity centers serve broader economic, entertainment, and community activities as compared to mixed-use neighborhoods. Uses and buildings are located on small blocks with streets designed to encourage pedestrian activities. Buildings in the core of a walkable activity center may stand three or more stories. Residential units or office space may be found above storefronts. Parking is satisfied by using on-street parking, structured parking, and shared rear-lot parking strategies.

A large-scale walkable activity center may be surrounded by one or more neighborhoods that encourage active living, with a comprehensive and interconnected network of walkable streets.





Transit Activity Center

A transit activity center represents the concentration of mixed-use, dense development around a transit center, whether serving bus rapid transit, light rail, street car, or commuter rail. Uses and buildings are located on small blocks with streets designed to encourage bicycle and pedestrian activity. High-density development is located primarily within ¼-mile of the transit station, with progressively lower densities spreading out into neighborhoods surrounding the center. Different transit technologies will spur slightly different development patterns and intensities around transit centers, but their similarities are more important than their differences for the development chip game.





Urban Center

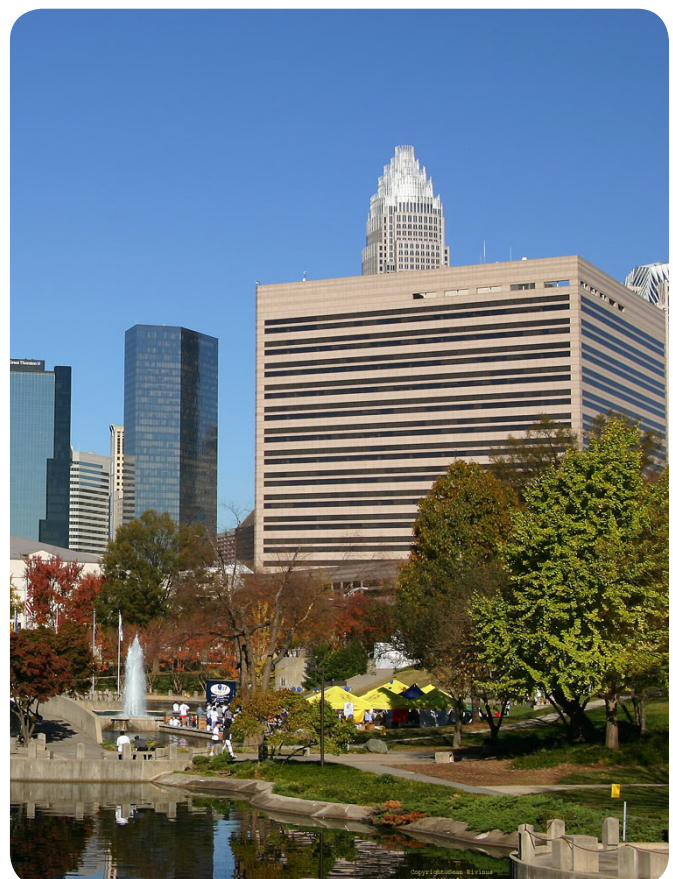
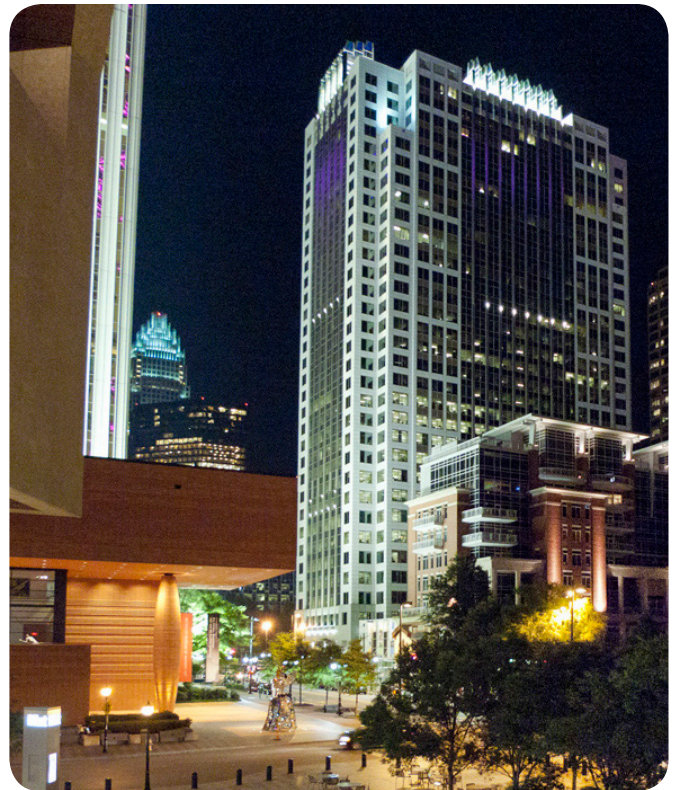
Urban centers (especially small downtowns) satisfy daily economic, entertainment, and community needs for surrounding neighborhoods. Uses and buildings are located on small blocks with streets designed to encourage pedestrian activity. Buildings in a town center (or other economic activity center) typically stand two or more stories in height with non-residential uses on the ground floor and residential units above storefronts. Surrounding urban neighborhoods are relatively compact and support moderate- to high-density housing options, including small, lot single-family homes, townhomes, condominiums, or apartments.

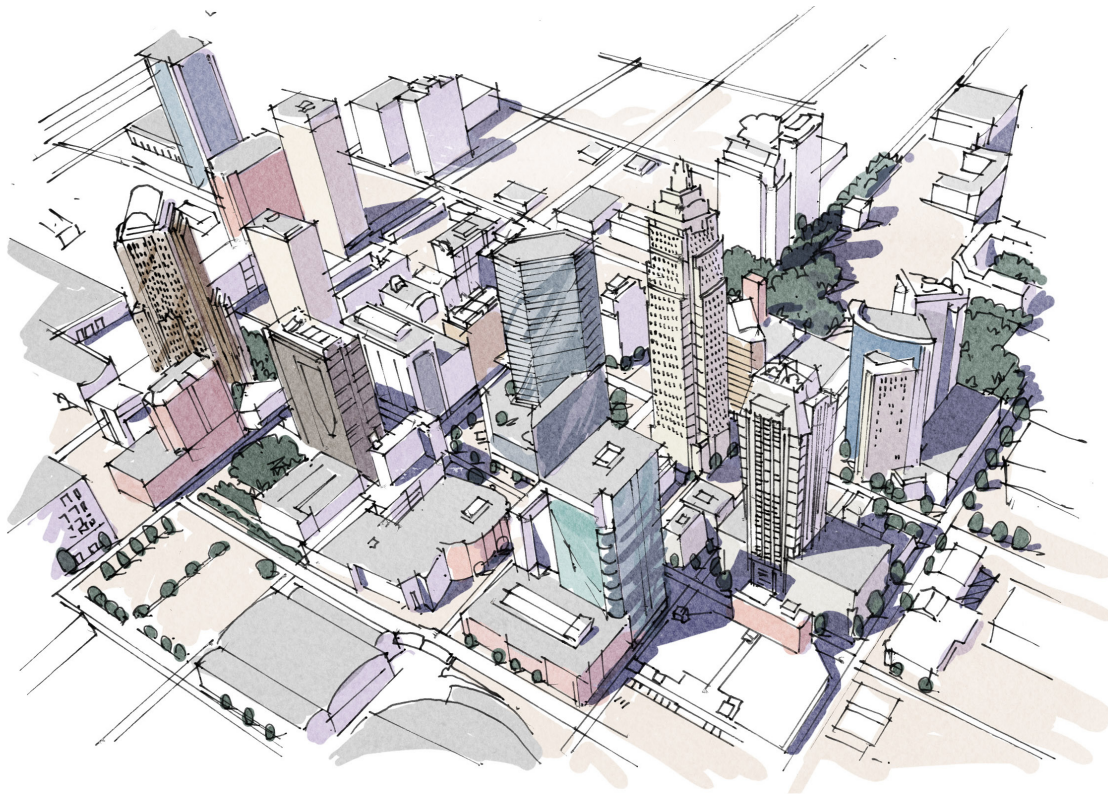




Metropolitan Center

A metropolitan center is the focal point of the region. It is a hub of employment, entertainment, civic, and cultural activities, with a mix of housing types and common open space for active living. As a magnet to surrounding towns and neighborhoods, the metropolitan center becomes an iconic symbol in the region, starting with very tall buildings and a compact street network. The walkable environment and mix of residential and non-residential uses in a metropolitan center support multiple modes of transportation. .





Special District

Special districts include airports, schools, utilities, government buildings, institutional/health care facilities, education campuses, amusement parks, etc. that are unique in the region and often orchestrated by their own sets of planning and design standards.

The ‘special district’ community type is identified on the work map to capture existing conditions in the region; however, it will not be a chip played during the development chip game. Participants should use their markers to identify areas in the county where unique uses should be located (see examples in the paragraph above) and add notes so the model development team understands the details behind the recommendation.





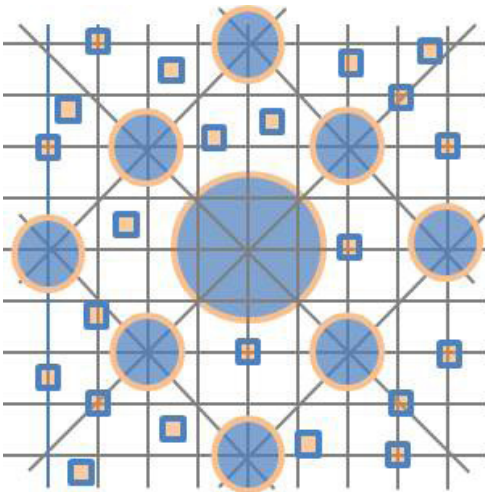
Starting Development Theme Descriptions

Four distinct development patterns were identified during ULI's Reality Check 2050 for meeting the demands of future growth, and these “general themes for accommodating future development” serve as the launching off point for the development chip games that are part of the Community Growth Workshops. Now participants will discuss the style, density, and form of development preferred in each of the fourteen counties (leaving two LEGO colors behind for eleven community type colors), and decide where growth and conservation are most consistent with local vision, values, and attitudes toward growth.

The four development themes for the chip game include: dispersed growth, compact urban, multiple centers, and major corridors. Each will be a starting chip set for playing the development chip game; however, only one chip set will be used at each table. Participants will also have the opportunity through “chip trading” to redefine the development types and patterns included in any of the starting chip sets to meet their needs for the game.

A brief description of each development themes follows:

Dispersed Growth

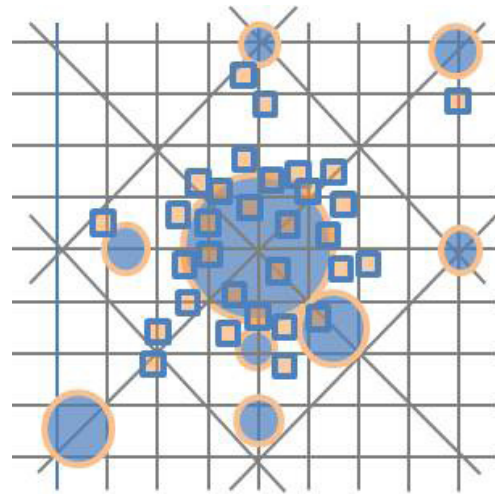


The dispersed growth pattern favors single-use, low-density development that is generally isolated. Expanding into surrounding rural areas generally requires outward expansion

of public utilities, and the physical distance between complementary uses such as home to work, home to shopping, or home to school promotes automobile travel. Many families with children enjoy the home and lot sizes available in low-density suburban neighborhoods, and the affordability is often cited as an acceptable trade-off for longer commute times.

Community types prevalent in the dispersed growth pattern include: suburban single-family neighborhood, suburban multifamily neighborhood, suburban commercial center, suburban office center, and industrial center.

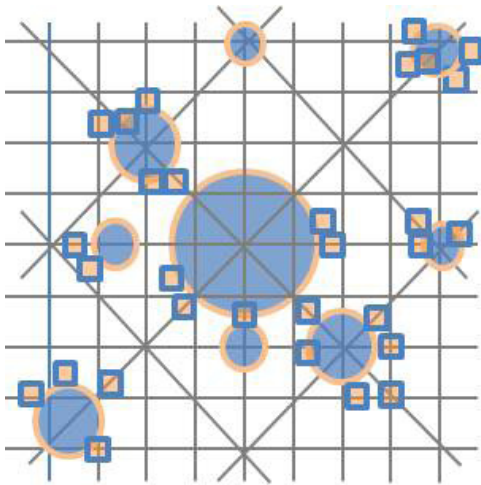
Compact Urban



The compact urban growth pattern targets a limited number of existing centers for new development, using government policies and/or capital planning to reinforce compact development. Infill development and redevelopment promotes a mix of uses and increases densities and intensities in existing centers, which could support multiple modes of transportation to accommodate daily travel needs such as work, shopping, and school. Areas outside the urban centers would be reserved for open space or agriculture uses under the development theme. Housing choice and job opportunities within the growth center makes it attractive to young adults, families, and retirees.

Community types prevalent in the compact urban growth pattern include: walkable neighborhood, walkable activity center, transit activity center, urban center, metropolitan center, open space, and working farms.

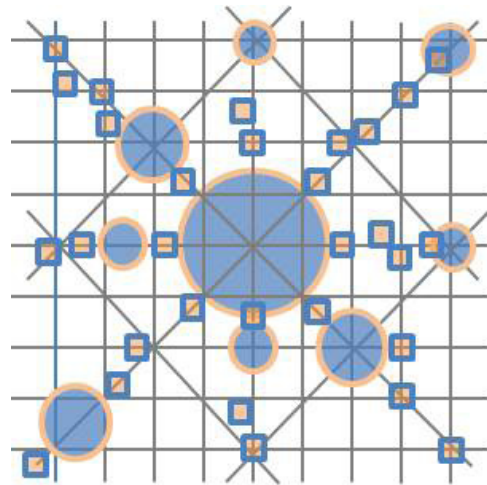
Multiple Centers



The multiple centers growth pattern focuses development into compact communities with nearby opportunities to live, work, shop, and entertainment. Development in each center could vary in scale, use, and intensity throughout the region and represent a diverse array of development such as rural living, community centers, employment centers, or town centers. Housing choice and job opportunities among the different growth centers make them attractive to young adults, families, and retirees. Areas outside the growth centers would be reserved for open space or agriculture uses under the development theme.

Community types prevalent in the multiple centers growth pattern include: rural living, walkable neighborhood, walkable activity center, transit activity center, urban center, open space, and working farms.

Major Corridors



The major corridors growth pattern concentrates development along existing or potential new transportation corridors in the region, including road and rail corridors. The mix of uses and development intensities vary based the surrounding development context — urban, suburban, or rural — with defined activity nodes spaced appropriately. Some corridors could support multiple modes of transportation to satisfy daily travel needs such as work, shopping, and school.

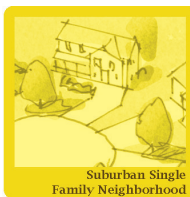
Community types prevalent in the major corridors growth pattern include: rural living, suburban single-family neighborhood, suburban multifamily neighborhood, suburban commercial center, suburban office center, industrial center, walkable neighborhood, walkable activity center, transit activity center, urban center, open space, and working farms.

Chip Trading Worksheets

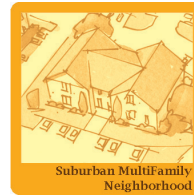
All Chips:



1 Suburban Single Family Neighborhood Chip =
20 Rural Living Chips



1 Suburban Multi - Family Neighborhood Chip =
50 Rural Living Chips



**1 Suburban Multi - Family Neighborhood Chip =
2.5 Suburban Single Family Neighborhood Chips**



=



**1 Walkable Neighborhood Chip =
16 Rural Living Chips
0.5 Suburban Commercial Center Chips
0.5 Suburban Office Center Chips**



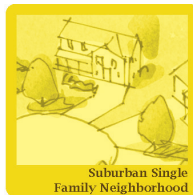
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**1 Walkable Neighborhood Chip =
1 Suburban Single Family Neighborhood Chip
0.5 Suburban Multifamily Neighborhood Chip
0.5 Suburban Commercial Center Chip
0.5 Suburban Office Center Chip**



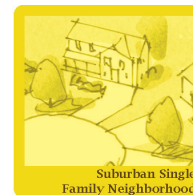
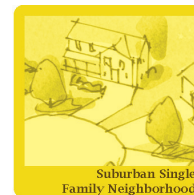
=



**1 Suburban Single Family Neighborhood Chip =
2 Suburban Single Family Neighborhood Chips
0.5 Suburban Multifamily Neighborhood Chip
0.5 Suburban Office Center Chip
0.5 Suburban Commercial Center Chip**



=



1 Walkable Center Chip =
31 Rural Living Chips
0.5 Suburban Commercial Center Chip
0.5 Suburban Office Center Chip



1 Walkable Center Chip =
2 Walkable Neighborhood Chips



1 Transit Activity Center Chip =
1.5 Suburban Multifamily Neighborhood Chips
0.5 Suburban Commercial Center Chips
0.5 Suburban Office Center Chips



CONNECT Our Future

**1 Transit Activity Center Chip =
3 Walkable Neighborhood Center Chips**



Vibrant Communities – Robust Region

**1 Urban Center Chip =
0.5 Suburban Single Family Neighborhood Chip
0.5 Suburban Multifamily Neighborhood Chip
1.0 Suburban Commercial Center Chip
0.5 Suburban Office Center Chip**



**1 Transit Activity Center Chip =
1.5 Walkable Center Chips**



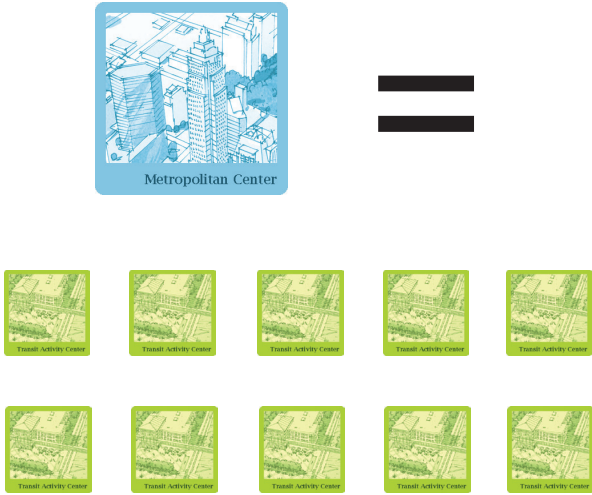
**1 Urban Center Chip =
1.5 Walkable Neighborhood Center Chips**



**1 Metropolitan Center Chip =
10 Urban Center Chips**



**1 Metropolitan Center Chip =
10 Transit Activity Center Chips**



Building Consensus

Each group at the workshop will be given a few minutes to summarize their experience; presenting thoughts around their vision for growth and conservation in the county, guiding principles to support the vision, preferred development patterns and intensities, new infrastructure needs, and closing remarks.

Other groups in the audience will listen to the presentations and use a form provided by the facilitator to record their thoughts, comments or concerns with the vision or work map being presented. Forms will be collected and summarized by the project team for influencing subsequent steps in the scenario planning process. Information from the workshops will also be summarized and presented in a composite map based on information collected from all the work maps collected at each workshop and shared with CONNECT Our Future project stakeholders.

Work Schedule

The Development Chip Game will last approximately two hours. Groups will have nearly all of this time to create their vision for growth and development in the county. Below is a general schedule that will let us complete the exercise within the allotted amount of time. These times are a general guide only, and may be adjusted, as needed, while keeping track of the overall schedule. A facilitator will be available at each table to answer questions.

Opening Presentation: 15 minutes

Community Growth Workshop facilitators will make a brief presentation to highlight current conditions in the county, growth trends through 2050, earlier CONNECT public input, and detailed workshop instructions.

Set Vision & Establish Guiding Principles: 10 minutes

Participants should work together to create a vision for growth and conservation in their county and develop guiding principles to support their vision. The guiding principles may address any facet of growth that could impact the group's vision, and may touch on a range of issues including business development, transportation and utility infrastructure, local policy and regulations, and conservation. The vision and guiding principles should be written on the work map and referred to throughout the exercise so the group stays focused on achieving what it set out to do.

Select a Starting Development Theme: 5 minutes

Four starting development themes were created for the exercise reflecting information that emerged during Reality Check 2050: dispersed growth, compact urban, multiple centers, and major corridors. Additional information on each of these themes may be found on pages 44 and 45 in the Starting Development Theme Description section. Each group should select one chip set to begin playing the game. The other three chip sets should be returned to the meeting facilitator.

Decide Where Not to Grow: 10 minutes

Markers are provided at each table to identify areas “off the table” for accommodating new development. Resource maps are available to guide the decision-making process. Participants should mark directly on the work map (in **black** marker) areas that are off limits for future development. This could include areas such as recreation or protected open space and working farms. Add notes to the map explaining why these areas were protected from future development.

Identify Priority Growth Areas: 10 minutes

Markers are provided at each table to identify priority growth areas for accommodating new development. These areas benefit from good geography, available infrastructure, local policies that support future development or redevelopment, or the group’s consensus based on other reasons. Resource maps are available to guide the decision-making process. Participants should mark directly on the work map (in **orange** marker) areas that should be targeted for future development. Add notes to the map explaining why these areas should be targeted for future development.

Draw New Infrastructure: 10 minutes

Markers are provided at each table to identify new or improved roads, transit routes, or greenways that support the group’s vision. Participants should mark directly on the work map their recommended improvements. For consistency, please limit recommended improvements to roads (**blue** marker), transit service (**red** marker), or greenways (**green** marker).

Arrange Chips on the Map: 45 minutes

Participants should arrange chips on the work map to implement the group’s vision and guiding principles for growth and conservation in the county. Participants should test different ideas as the chips move around. This is a time to experiment with different themes or alternatives.

Don’t stick the chips down yet!

Groups may also trade chips in their starting development theme packet with the “banker”. Rules for trading chips may be found on the “chip trading worksheets” found on pages 46 through 50 to keep anticipated growth consistent among participating groups. A ten-minute warning will be called

during this step in the exercise. At this time, participants should peel off the backing from all the stickers and permanently affix them to the work map. Additional notes that support the group’s vision for growth within the county should be put on the map with the provided markers.

Group Presentations: 10 minutes

The group should name their map and choose a presenter. Each group will be given a few minutes to summarize their experience. General information presented to the larger group should be organized as follows: vision for growth in the county, guiding principles to support the vision, preferred development theme, potential new infrastructure, and closing thoughts. Participants from other groups will have a chance to comment on each group’s work using a feedback form that will be completed as they listen to each presentation.

Closing Remarks: 5 minutes

The Community Growth Workshop facilitators will discuss planning themes identified during the development chip game and briefly outline the next steps for CONNECT Our Future.

How Do I Stay Involved?

Community Growth Workshops to support CONNECT Our Future will conclude on October 17, 2014.

The ideas discussed and maps developed at community growth workshops held across the region will be combined with input gathered in earlier phases of the project. From these shared ideas, four or five possible scenarios for growth in the region will be created. These scenarios will reflect the different perspectives and desired outcomes that people have shared across the region. In the spring and summer of 2014, residents from across the region will again be asked for input — this time about which of the growth scenarios they prefer. Feedback from the open houses will be influential in the Consortium’s work to develop a preferred growth scenario for the CONNECT Region.

Please follow us on Facebook, Twitter, or e-newsletter for up-to-date information about next steps in the scenario planning process. Or become a “CONNECT-or” by inviting your neighbors, friends, faith group, book club or family to join you in attending an Open House to review the final Alternative Growth Scenarios this spring and summer!

Specific questions about the project should be directed to Sushil Nepal, Project Manager for CONNECT our Future at snepal@centralina.org or 704-372-2416.

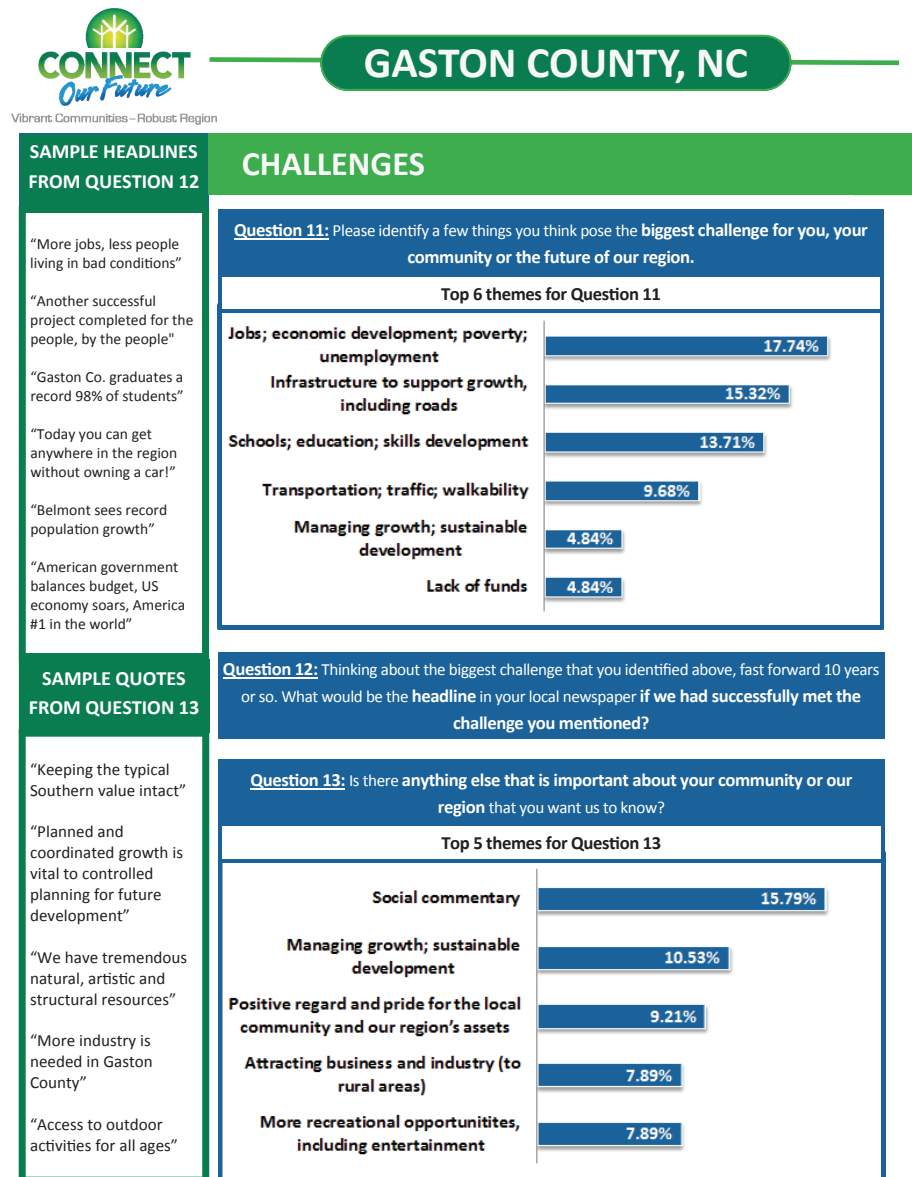
Appendix I:

CONNECT Our Future Open House Events & Small Group Discussions

Between November 2012 and February 2013, 104 open houses and small group meetings and 260 completed web surveys in the CONNECT Region were used to capture thoughts, opinions, and desires related to development, growth, and quality of life issues facing communities today or anticipated

in the future. Over 2,200 residents, business owners, and elected officials participated, including 130 in Gaston county.

A summary of data and information gathered through the above activities for Gaston County can be found below. Similar information for other counties in the region is available from the CONNECT Our Future website (www.ConnectOurFuture.org).





Vibrant Communities – Robust Region

GASTON COUNTY, NC

PHASE I
RESULTS

WHAT IS CONNECT Our Future?

CONNECT Our Future is a 3 phase engagement process:

Phase I: Input from the community on what is important to them

Phase II: Design of regional growth options through Community Growth Workshops and RealityCheck 2050

Phase III: Growth option selection based on the outcomes citizens of our region want for the future

SAMPLE QUOTES FROM QUESTION 1

"Redevelopment efforts in older downtown Gastonia, Belmont, Kannapolis"

"Crowder's Mt. State Park - White Water creek, the many small natural areas"

"Martha Rivers Park"

"Stowe Botanical Gardens, Schiele Museum, community concerts"

"Gaston college - wonderful community college used a feeder to 4 year colleges"

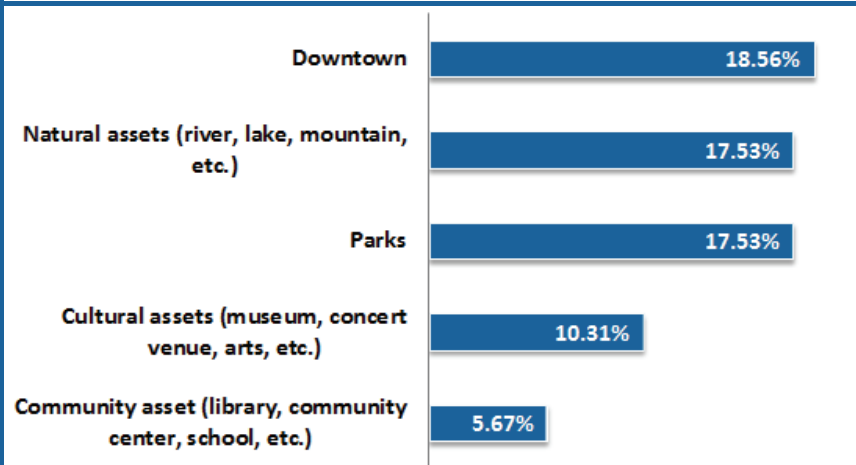
THE BEST OF COMMUNITIES & THE REGION

CONNECT Our Future is a groundbreaking opportunity for the residents of the 14-county region in NC and SC to work together and create a regional growth framework to help plan for the increase in population we anticipate, while building on the needs and plans that already exist.

CONNECT Our Future Phase I brought together **over 2,200 participants** to participate in a series of open houses and small groups. Phase I strived to reach a broad citizen base representing the demographics of the region.

Question 1: What is a place that illustrates the best of your community, or our region?

Top 5 themes for Question 1



Question 2: What are 3 words/phrases you would use to describe this place to a visitor?



Friendly ... Historic
... Beautiful

Questions 3 & 4: What are some things about this place that are especially important to you?



Lakes, rivers,
mountains ...
Recreation

Questions 5 & 6: When you think of the importance, what might be some of those deeper meanings?



Relaxing & calming ...
Safety ... Family

All responses are listed on the CONNECT Our Future website at www.ConnectOurFuture.org

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Vibrant Communities – Robust Region

GASTON COUNTY, NC

WHERE DID WE TALK TO PEOPLE?

Open house on
January 31, 2012 in
Gastonia at the
Gaston Police
Department

Open house on
February 5, 2013 in
Belmont at **Belmont**
Abbey College

Small group on
February 6, 2013
with **ImageMark**

Small group on
February 6, 2013
with **Keeping**
Families Together

Open house on
February 19, 2013 at
the **Mt. Holly**
Municipal Complex

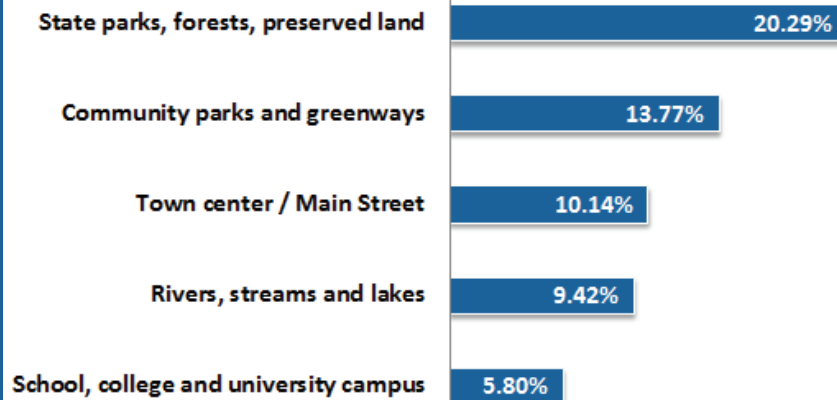
4 small groups on
February 27, 2013 at
Gaston College

FEATURES OF OUR REGION

Question 7 & 8 asked participants to consider a list of **31 features of our region**.

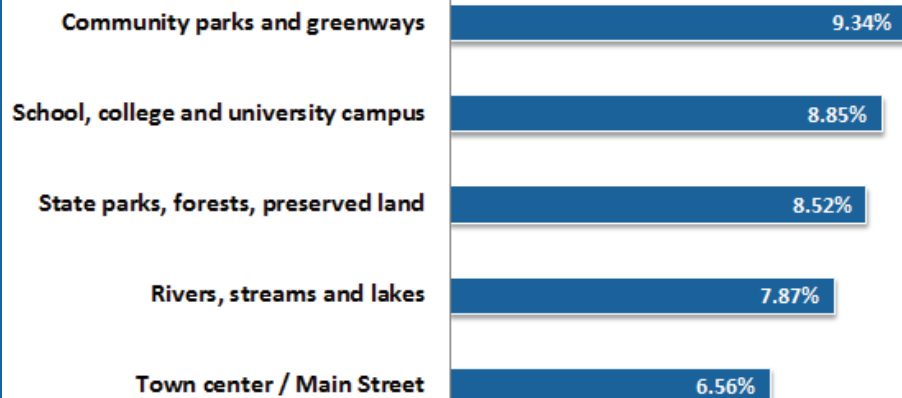
Question 7: What is the **one feature** that best represents the place you named in Question 1?

Top 5 Responses from Question 7



Question 8: What are the **5 features** that you feel are **most important** for the future of your community and our region?

Top 5 Responses from Question 8



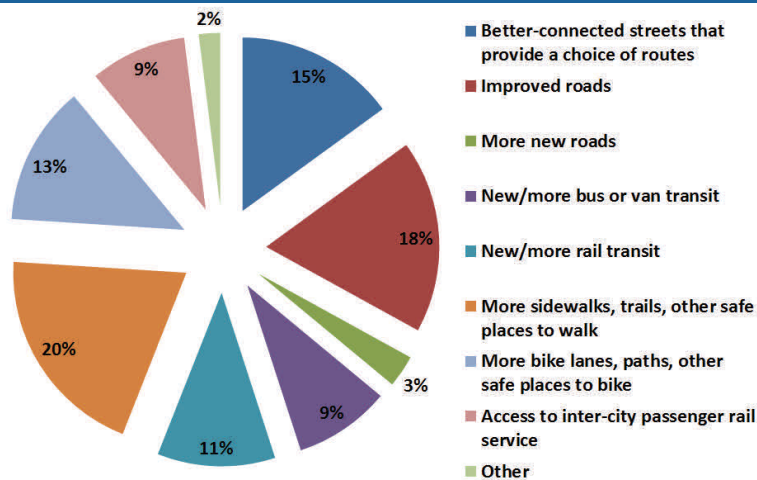
TRANSPORTATION

Questions 9 & 10 specifically asked about **transportation needs** in the community. Participants chose from the following features:

- Better-connected streets that provide a choice of routes
- Improved roads
- More new roads
- New/more bus or van transit
- New/more rail transit
- More sidewalk, other safe places to walk
- More bike lanes, other safe places to bike
- Access to inter-city passenger rail services
- Other

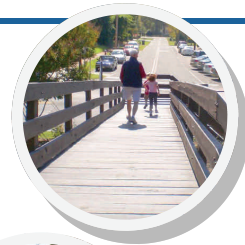
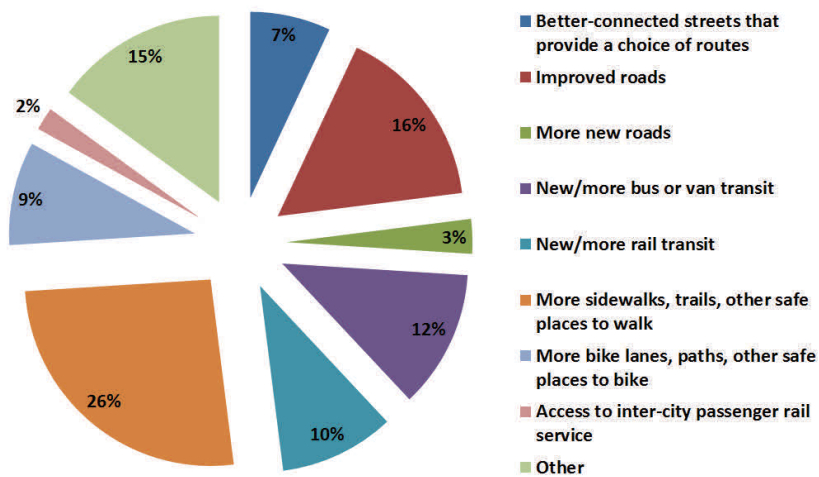
Question 9: When you think about the **future transportation needs** of your community, which **3 transportation features** are the most important to you?

Responses from Question 9



Question 10: What is the **one transportation feature** that is most important to you?

Responses from Question 10



All responses are listed on the CONNECT Our Future website at www.ConnectOurFuture.org

3

Appendix II:

Agriculture Statistics - Crops and Livestock

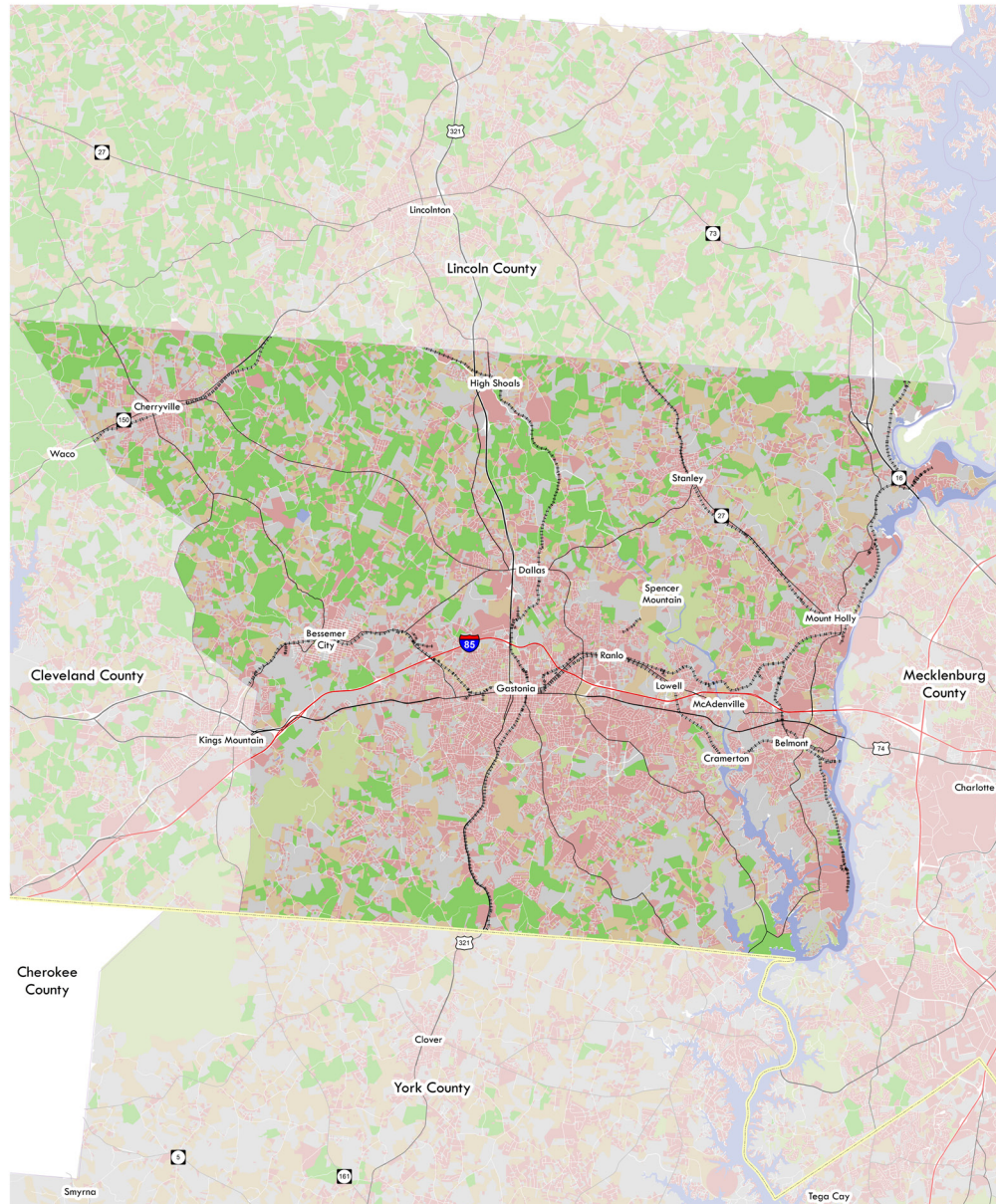
COUNTY	CROPS GROWN	LIVESTOCK
ANSON, NC	corn 24, cotton 34, hay 42, soybeans 37	broilers 9, cattle 37, hogs and pigs 23, layers 13, turkeys 8
CABARRUS, NC	corn 41, hay 10, soybeans 57, wheat 30, nursery 41, vegetables / fruits / nuts / berries 86	broilers 42, cattle 23, hogs and pigs 48
CLEVELAND, NC	corn 56, cotton 40, hay 17, soybeans 44, wheat 15, nursery 32, vegetables / fruits / nuts / berries 27	broilers 17, cattle 14
CHESTER, SC	hay 46, soybeans 61, wheat 34, nursery 60, vegetables / fruits / nuts / berries 68	broilers 44, cattle 37
GASTON, NC	corn 17, hay 5, soybeans 25, wheat 13, nursery 39, vegetables / fruits / nuts / berries 50	broilers 48, cattle 1, layers 5
IREDELL, NC	corn 60, hay 32, soybeans 55, wheat 42, nursery 85, vegetables / fruits / nuts / berries 28	broilers 36, cattle 29, layers 50
LANCASTER, SC	hay 64, soybeans 73, nursery 1, vegetables / fruits / nuts / berries 71	cattle 65
LINCOLN, NC	corn 22, hay 8, soybeans 28, wheat 12, vegetables / fruits / nuts / berries 21	broilers 55, cattle 8, layers 24
MECKLENBURG, NC	corn 18, cotton 11, hay 27, soybeans 26, wheat 17, vegetables / fruits / nuts / berries 78	broilers 28, cattle 16, layers 28, turkeys 13
ROWAN, NC	corn 2, cotton 35, hay 22, soybeans 1, wheat 16, nursery 10, vegetables / fruits / nuts / berries 20	broilers 3, cattle 10, layers 3, turkeys 4
STANLY, NC	corn 7, cotton 18, hay 10, soybeans 36, wheat 20	turkeys 11, layers 12, cattle 5, horses 22, goats 33
UNION, NC	corn 29, hay 16, soybeans 29, wheat 29	turkeys 2, broilers 21, cattle 12, horses 12, quail 12
UNION, SC	hay 24, nursery 28, corn 31, vegetables fruits / nuts / berries 43	layers 16, cattle 24, goats 30, horse 36, pullets 29
YORK, SC	hay 5, cotton 20, wheat 28, corn 34, peaches 8	turkeys 7, cattle 6, hogs and pigs 9, ducks 1, horses 6

Appendix III:

Resource Maps

CONNECT Our Future Scenario Planning Initiative

Resource Maps for the Community Growth Workshops



Development Status Map for Gaston County



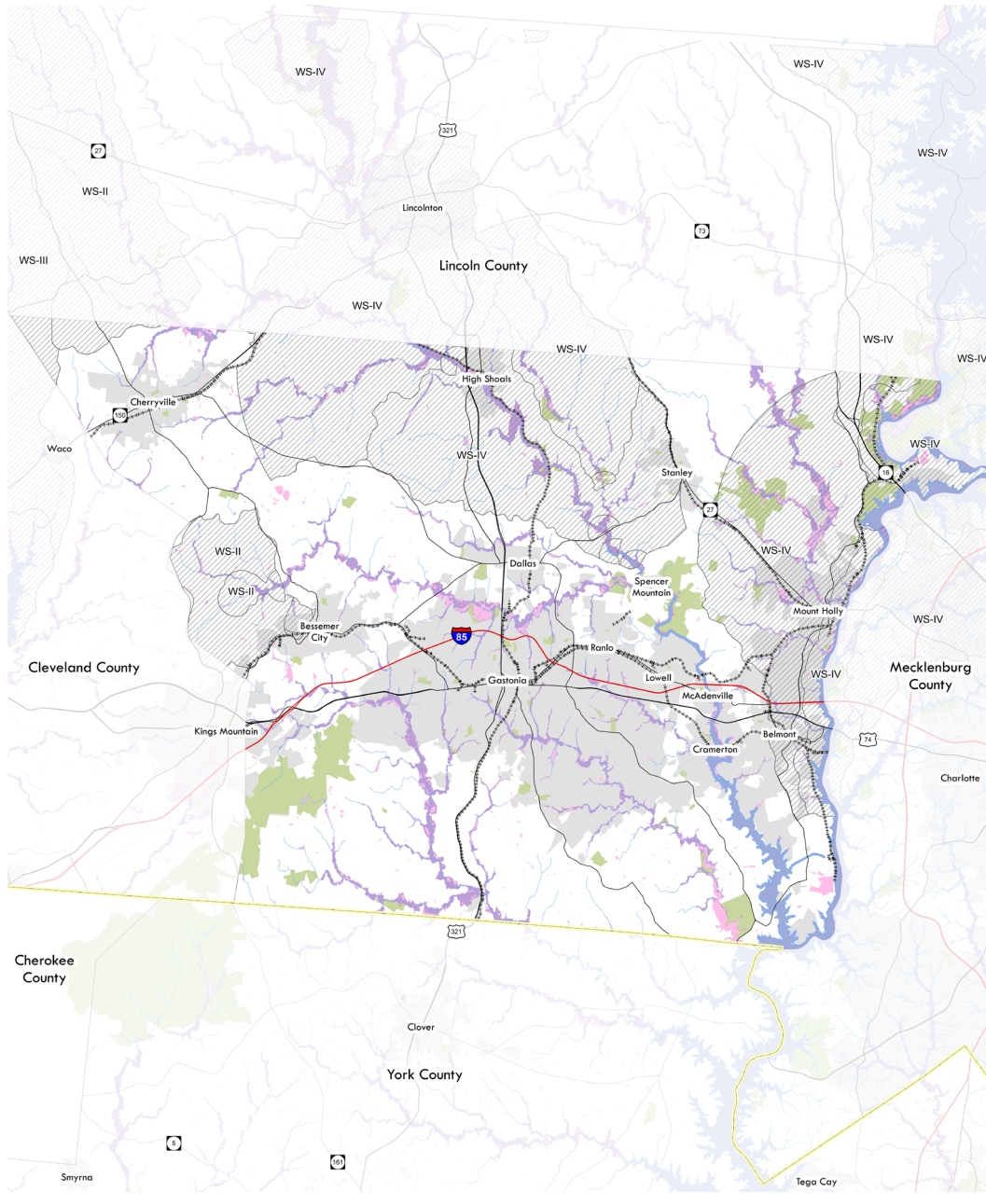
[^] = Lots or parcels with permanent buildings or structures that occupy only a small portion of the property; leaving significant area available for future development.

Last Revised September 12, 2013

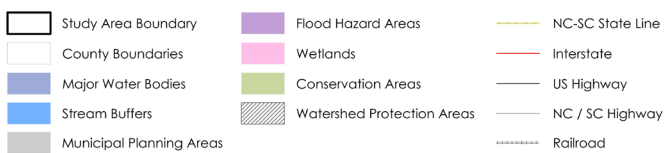


CONNECT Our Future Scenario Planning Initiative

Resource Maps for the Community Growth Workshops



Environmental Features Map for Gaston County

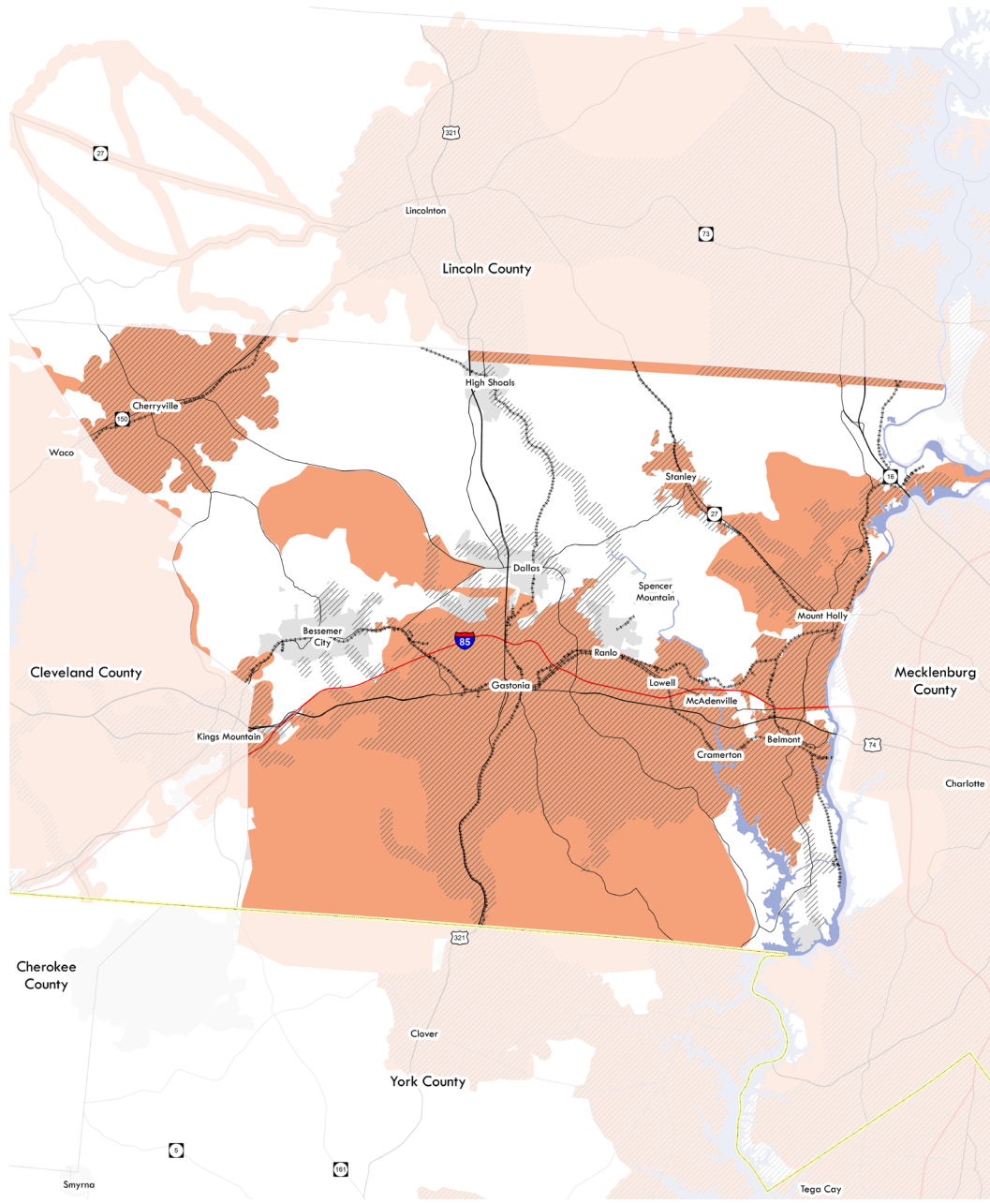


Last Revised September 12, 2013

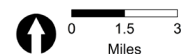
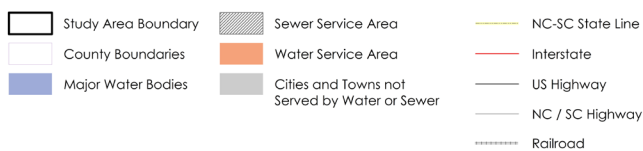


CONNECT Our Future Scenario Planning Initiative

Resource Maps for the Community Growth Workshops



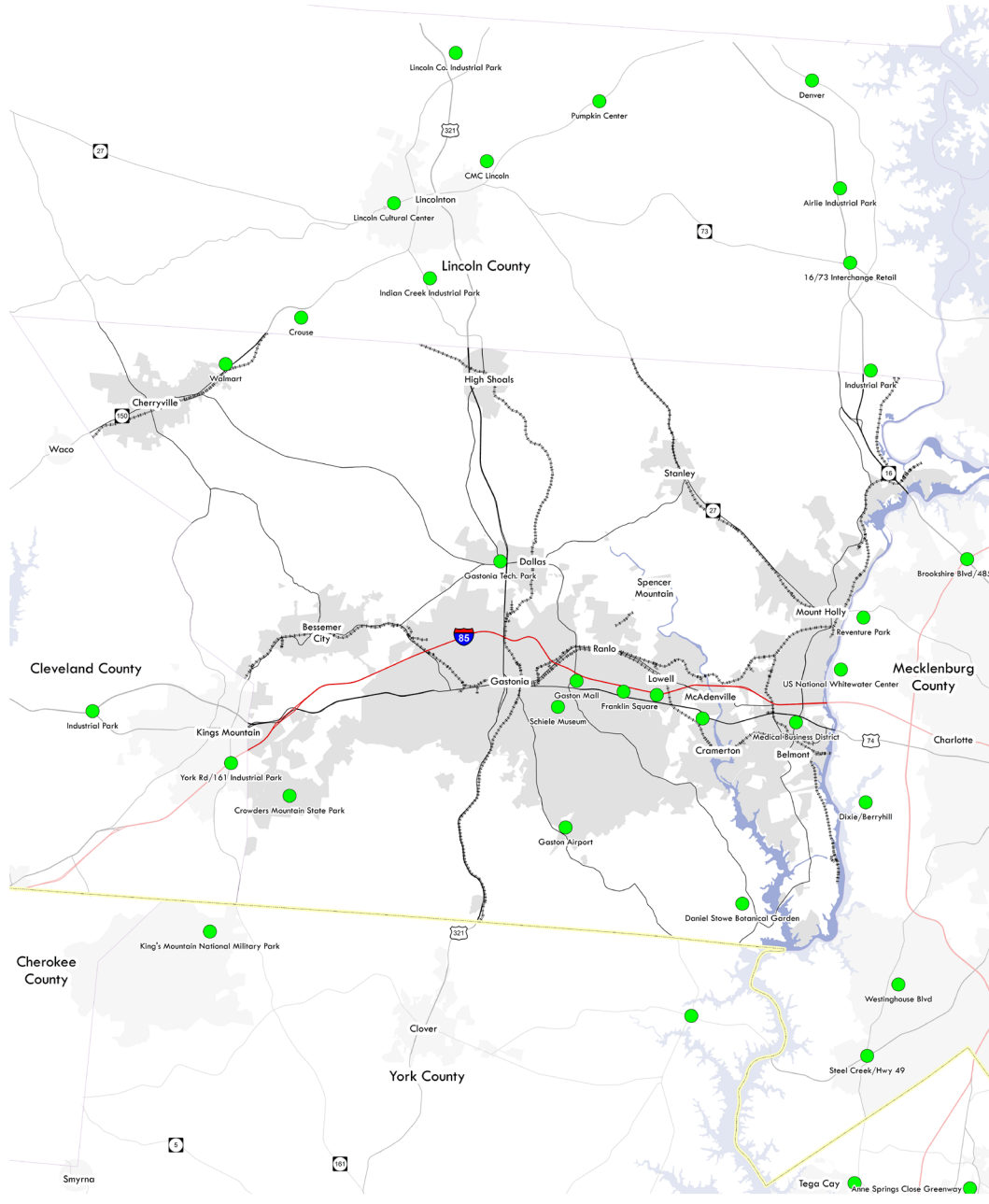
Water & Sewer Service Area Map for Gaston County



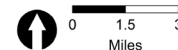
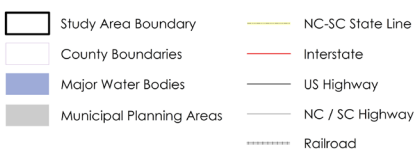
Last Revised September 13, 2013

CONNECT Our Future Scenario Planning Initiative

Resource Maps for the Community Growth Workshops



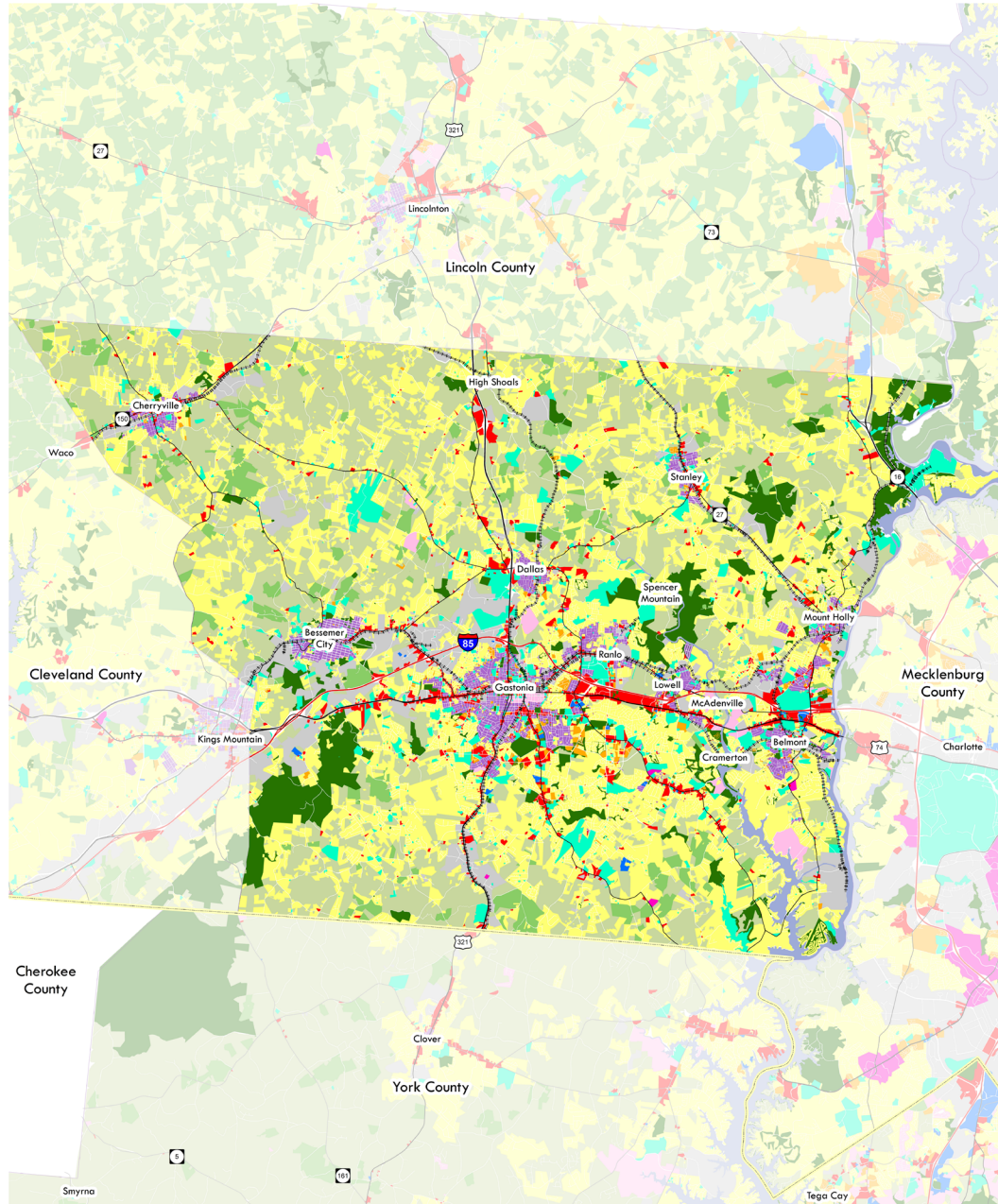
Municipal Planning Areas & Major Activity Centers in Gaston County



Last Revised September 12, 2013

CONNECT Our Future Scenario Planning Initiative

Resource Maps for the Community Growth Workshops



General Development Map



Last Revised September 12, 2013

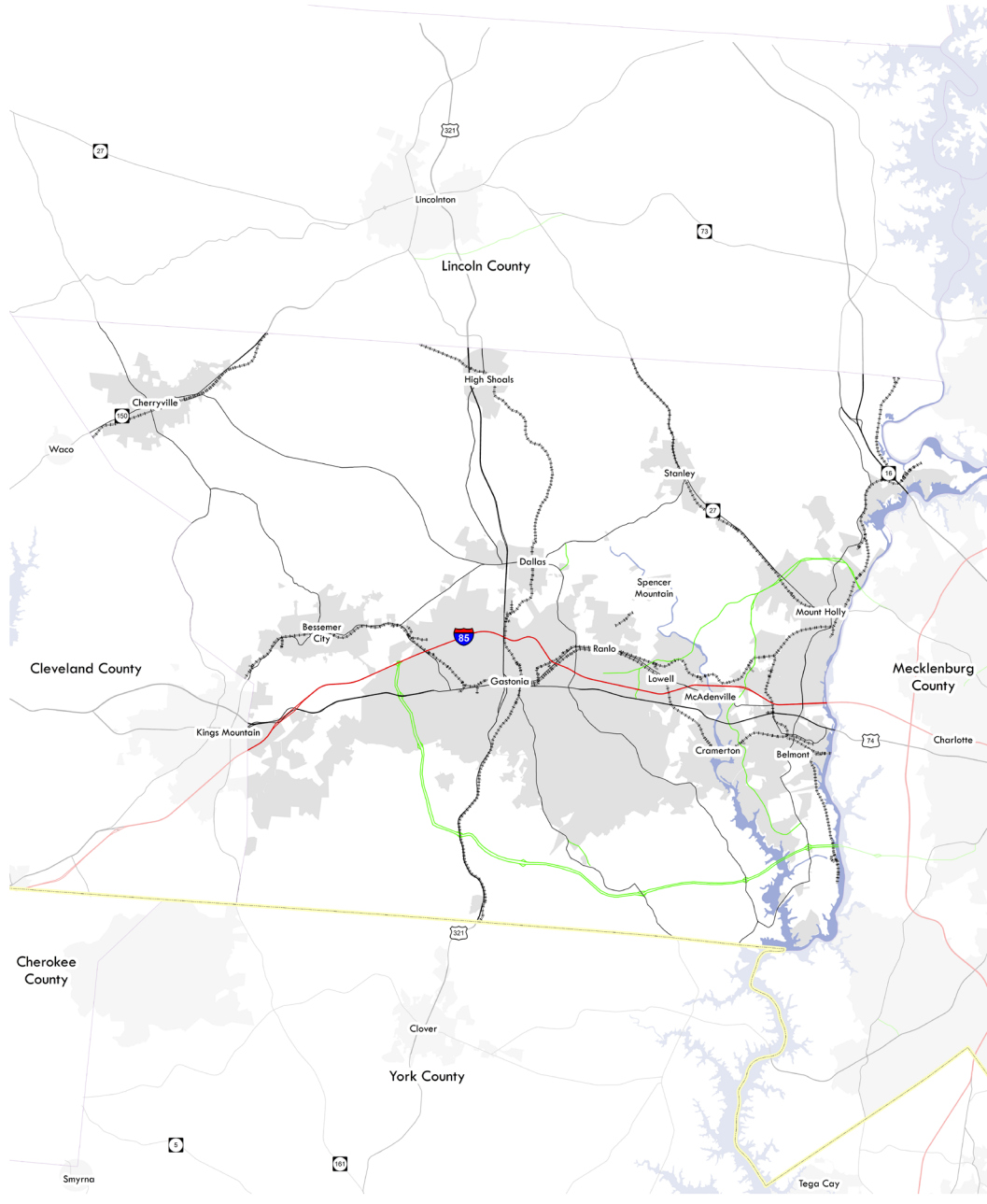


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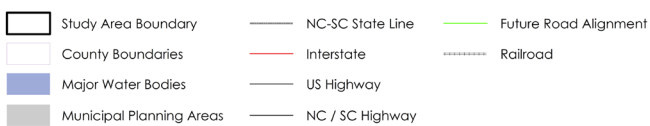


CONNECT Our Future Scenario Planning Initiative

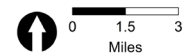
Resource Maps for the Community Growth Workshops



Existing & Committed Major Road Network in Gaston County[^]



[^] = Existing and committed road data summarized from local MPO Long Range Transportation Plans and/or RPO Comprehensive Transportation Plans.



Last Revised September 12, 2013

References:

1. *Charlotte Regional Partnership*. Retrieved July 8, 2013, from www.charlotteusa.com.
2. US Census Bureau. Longitudinal Employer – *Household Dynamics*. Retrieved July 8, 2013.

CONNECT our Future
Vibrant Communities – Robust Region

