

CONNECT Our FUTURE



Mecklenburg County

Preferred Growth
Scenario Primer



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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.

Preferred Growth Scenario Primer

“*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. The 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 most important goal of *CONNECT Our Future* is to build vibrant communities in a robust region, where they have the ability to grow by choice, not by chance.

The Preferred Growth Scenario Primer for *CONNECT Our Future* summarizes four alternative future year growth scenarios contemplated for the region, and enumerates the trade-offs between them for preparing a preferred regional growth framework (comprised of a preferred growth scenario map, supporting recommendations, and a toolkit of best practices). It highlights the results from model indicators developed using CommunityViz scenario planning software, and captures the thoughts and opinions from participants in a third round of community engagement activities aimed at vetting the four alternatives.

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

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 and diverse economy, high quality education opportunities, enhanced social equity, and increased collaboration among jurisdictions. Work groups under CONNECT Our Future include: public engagement, blueprinting (land use, community design, transportation), economic development, housing, energy, air quality and climate change, food access and logistics, and public health. The program is supported by a \$4.9 million HUD Sustainable Communities Grant and \$3.0 million in local public and private resources.

The Preferred Growth Scenario Primer for *CONNECT Our Future* summarizes four alternative future year growth scenarios contemplated for the region, and enumerates the tradeoffs between them for preparing a preferred regional growth framework (comprised of a preferred growth scenario map, supporting recommendations, and a toolkit of best practices). It highlights the results from model indicators developed using CommunityViz scenario planning software, and captures the thoughts and opinions from participants in a third round of community engagement activities aimed at vetting the four alternatives. Local governments, regional councils and organizations, state agencies, and private entities are encouraged to implement items under the growth framework in accordance with local procedures and resident's stated preferences for change.

The Primer document will be a resource for fourteen county-level consortium meetings scheduled to discuss strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and trade-offs associated with each of the alternative growth scenarios. Participants will also work together to learn more about the push and pull relationships between the environment, development patterns and intensities, supporting infrastructure, and fiscal sustainability for defining the tenets of a preferred growth scenario for the CONNECT Region. Statements toward growth and conservation in each county will be recorded at the events, and work will begin to develop a preferred growth scenario map to serve as the framework for a toolkit of best practices that will be developed later in the planning process for *CONNECT Our Future*.

The intention of the county-level consortium meetings is not to pick one of the four alternative growth scenarios as the preferred growth scenario. Thoughts, opinions, and priorities from the discussion at each event will guide the development of a preferred growth scenario, which most likely will represent a combination of the strengths from two or more of the alternative growth scenarios. The preferred growth scenario will be tested in CommunityViz, and the results shared with the CONNECT Consortium Program and Policy Forums before endorsing a growth framework for the fourteen-county region.

Other resource documents that support the scenario planning initiative for *CONNECT Our Future* are available on the project's website (www.ConnectOurFuture.org).

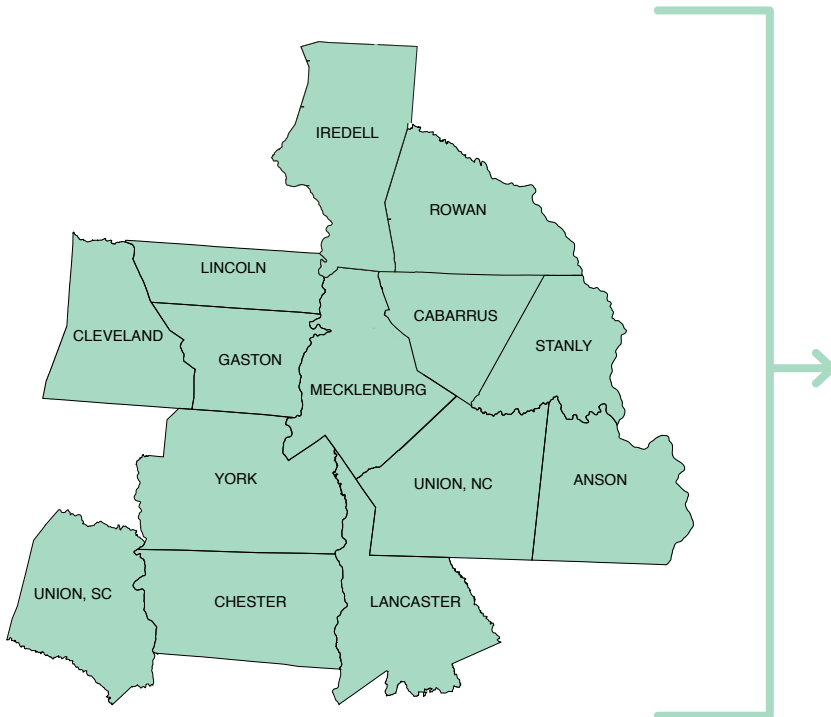
CONNECT Region

The CONNECT Region is expansive, covering 7,100 square miles and 1.127 million parcels of real estate, two states, and fourteen counties. It includes 120 local communities 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 agriculture soils, and air quality, bind the region together and blur city, town, county, and state boundaries.

Together, the CONNECT Region represents a land area larger than the State of Connecticut and a population greater than fifteen US States (US Census Bureau, 2010). US Census data indicates the CONNECT Region was the fastest growing metropolitan region over one million in the United States between 2000 and 2010, and projections indicate the population could nearly double in four decades (2050).

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. 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.

Map of the CONNECT Region

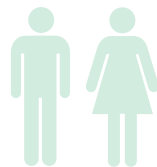


Physical Characteristics of the CONNECT Region:

- 7,100 square miles
- 1.127 million parcels
- 2 states
- 14 counties
- 3 major water basins
- 3 councils of government
- 4 metropolitan planning organizations
- 120 local communities

Population in the CONNECT Region:

2010: 2,431,500
2050: 4,241,000*



* Projected Numbers Used for CONNECT Our Future

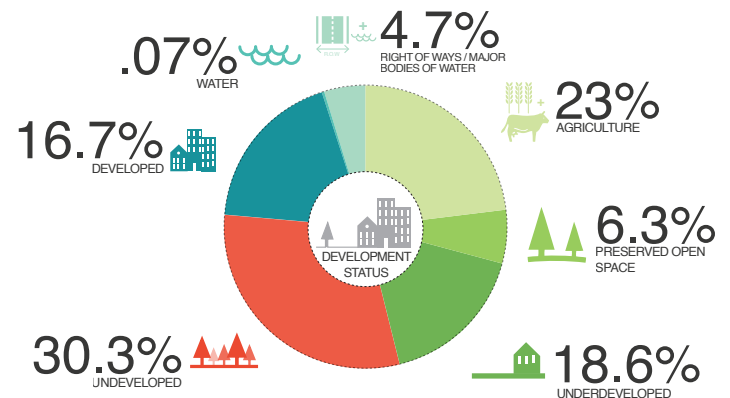
Employment in the CONNECT Region:

2010: 1,313,995
2050: 2,177,255*



* Projected Numbers Used for CONNECT Our Future

Development Status in the CONNECT Region:



Note:

"Underdeveloped"= Developed land with a significant portion still available for future development (under-utilized lots or parcels), or developed land with buildings or structures in need of redevelopment.

Community Engagement

The thoughts and opinions of participants in *CONNECT Our Future* were again captured during a third major round of community engagement. This time the effort was aimed at vetting the region's ten growth priorities and four alternative growth scenarios intended to safeguard the region's stated goals and values for 2050 (voiced in previous community engagement activities for CONNECT Our Future). Standardized questions about growth, competing development options, and the tradeoffs between them were presented using a variety of media and small group meetings. A brief summary of these tools and events are provided below.

MetroQuest On-Line Engagement

MetroQuest is an on-line community engagement tool that has been used for a variety of large-scale, regional planning projects throughout the United States. For the CONNECT Region, it provided information about ten growth priorities and four distinct alternatives for growth and development. Ranking the growth priorities (top five) and providing opinions for each of the four alternative growth scenarios (likes and dislikes) provided valuable information for preparing the preferred growth scenario in future phases of the scenario planning process.

The on-line tool was open from March 6 to April 17, 2014, and included both English and Spanish versions for participants. Over 1,768 residents, business owners, elected officials, civic leaders, students, etc. provided feedback. Information was summarized using MetroQuest's statistical tools and combined with data from the other engagement events.

County & Community Growth Forums

Twenty-eight county and community growth forums were held throughout the CONNECT Region to share the results of previous engagement activities, discuss the region's ten growth priorities, and sort through four alternative growth scenarios for meeting future demands. Identical sessions were held at each event to standardize the process, which included one or more group presentations, question and answer periods, and keypad voting exercises.

Visitors in between sessions were invited to provide their input via hard-copy survey or MetroQuest on iPads available at each location. 236 people attended the county and community growth forums held in the region.

Information received at the county and community growth forums (important priorities, likes and dislikes, general impressions, etc.) was summarized by the project team and combined with data from the other engagement events.

Small Group Meetings

Small-group meetings were used to reach individuals in the CONNECT Region not likely to participate in traditional civic meetings (for any number of reasons). Groups targeted for specific meetings included low-income individuals, the working poor, under-represented demographics, and Spanish-speaking communities. Meetings in neighborhoods and community buildings followed the same general format as the county and community growth forums: group presentation, question and answer period, and keypad input exercise.

A total of 34 small-group meetings were hosted to support the third round of community engagement. 390 people attended one of the events. Information received at the small-group meetings (important priorities, likes and dislikes, general impressions, etc.) was summarized by the project team and combined with data from the other engagement events.

Youth & Crowd Sourcing Events

Youth participation was a priority for this phase of community engagement to support CONNECT Our Future, especially with the objective to build consensus in the region for the growth priorities and growth scenarios important to meet demands anticipated through 2050. Eighteen different events were scheduled with high-school students, members of Generation X (born between 1965 and 1985), young professionals, and other youth groups attending community festivals or events.

406 people participated in one of the youth or crowd sourcing events. Information received from the events (important priorities, likes and dislikes, general impressions, etc.) was summarized by the project team and combined with data from the other engagement events.

Business Outreach

Eighteen outreach activities with the business community were completed for this phase of community engagement to engage leaders about future infrastructure needs and a quality-of-life advantageous for future job and business growth. Presentations to Rotary Clubs and business- and industry-related groups were supplemented with visits to specific business locations to get the word out and record feedback.

In total, 320 people participated in a business outreach event. Information received from the events (important priorities, likes and dislikes, general impressions, etc.) was summarized by the project team and combined with data from the other engagement events.

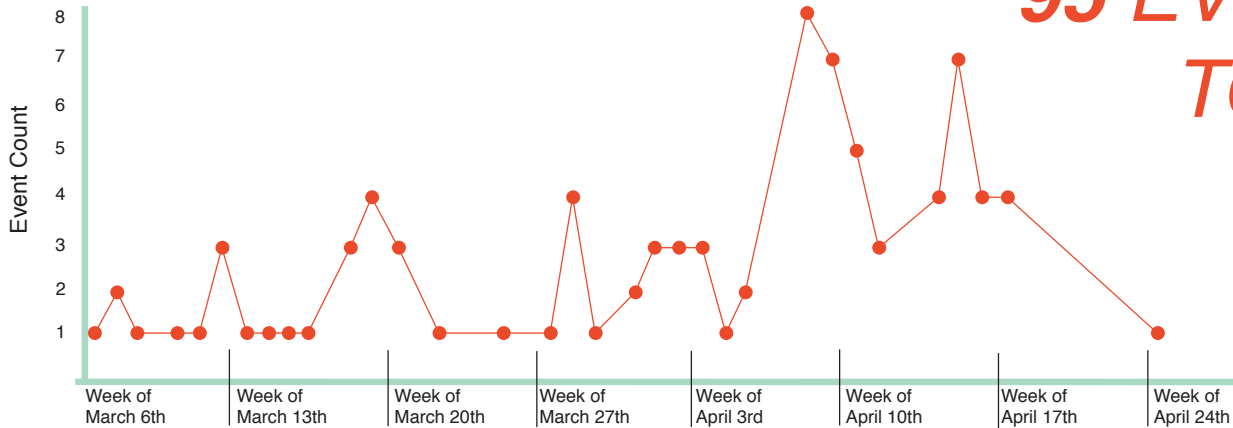


Who Participated?

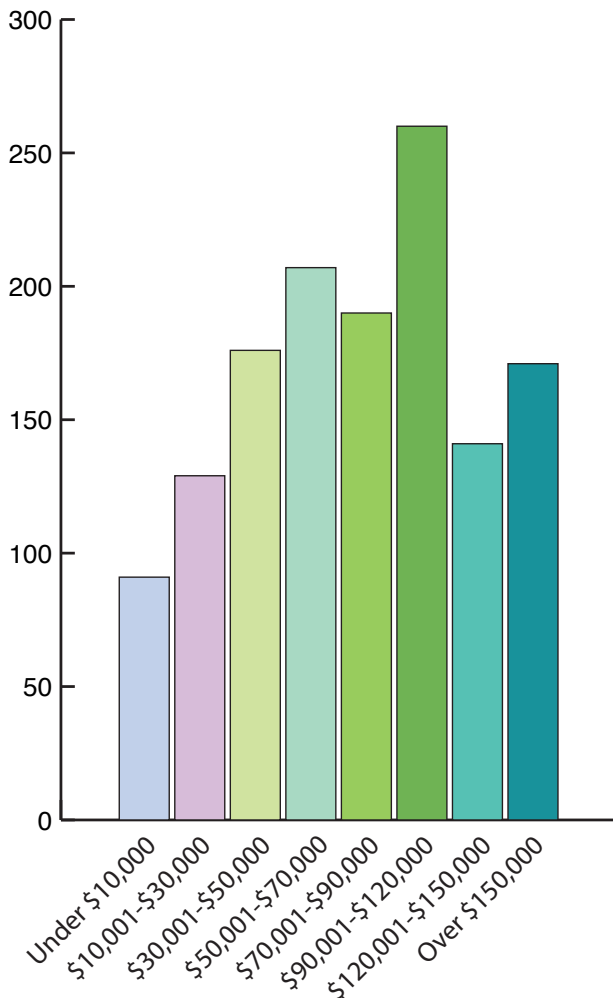
Note: Of the 2,451 persons who provided input, 1,669 provided demographic information.

Total Events Held:

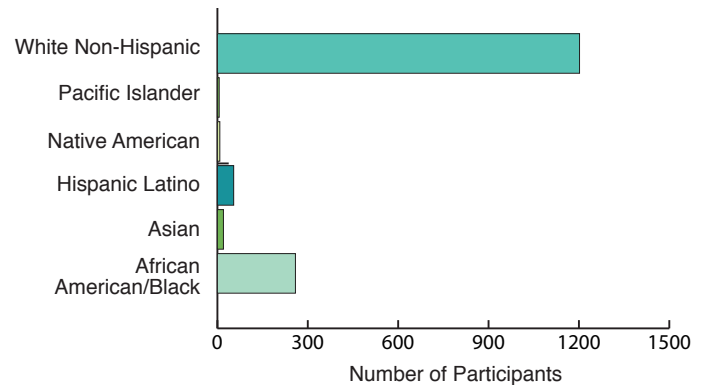
**95 EVENTS
TOTAL!**



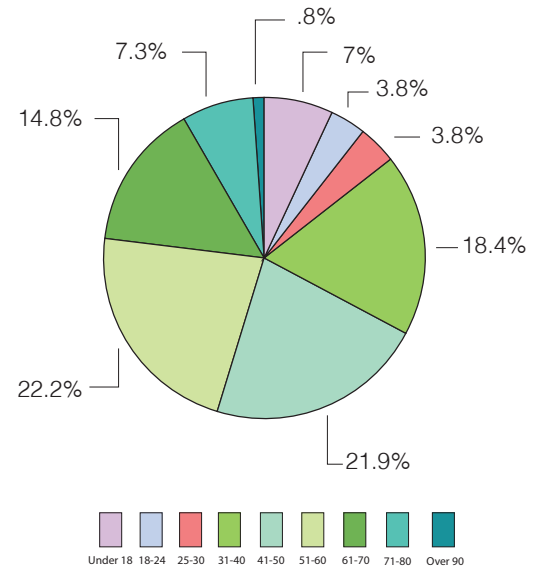
Household Income:



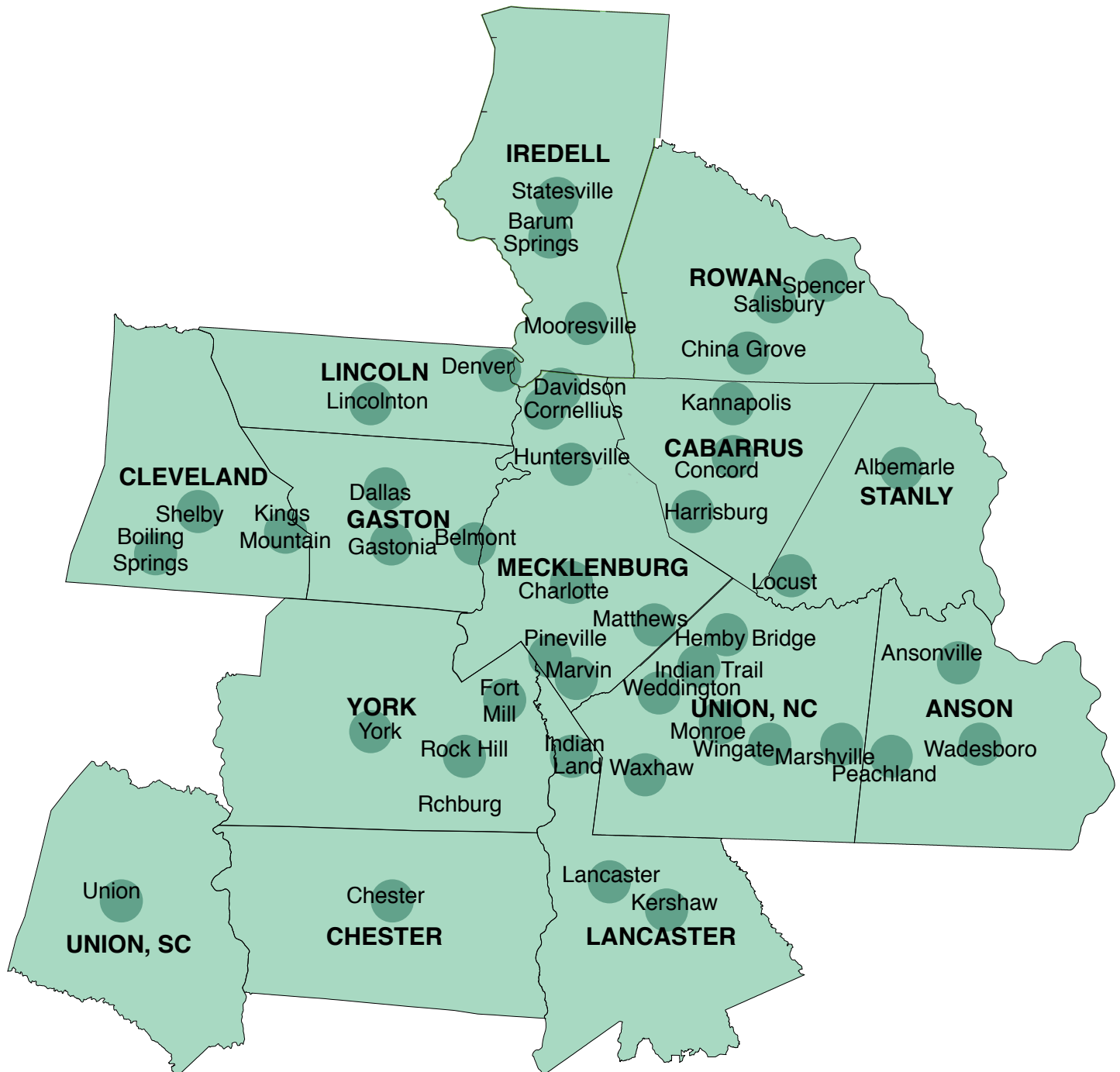
Ethnicity:



Age:



Participation by Location:



CONNECT Region-at-a-Glance

The Region-at-a-Glance summarizes existing conditions and the results from the model indicators developed using CommunityViz scenario planning software, and captures feedback from participants in the third round of community engagement aimed at vetting the region's ten growth priorities and four alternative growth scenarios. Data, thoughts, ideas, and opinions generated for the region are provided under the following headings: growth priorities, regional growth scenarios, side-by-side comparison of all ten growth priorities, and side-by-side comparison of individual growth priorities.

Growth Priorities

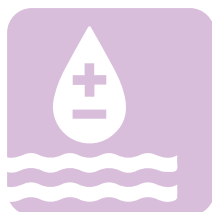
Ten important growth priorities for the CONNECT Region were identified in previous phases of the project. A definition for each is provided below, including an explanation for how it was measured using CommunityViz. Participants in the third round of community engagement ranked the ten growth priorities (top five, bottom five) for what they would like to protect, enhance, improve, or maximize as the region continues to grow.



More Transportation Choices

People said more transportation choices – walking, bicycling, transit, and automobile – are important to them.

The priority was measured by identifying the number of travel modes supported by specific development patterns.



Improved Water Quality

People said the environment is important, and clean water with fewer pollutants is a concern.

The priority was measured by the amount of impervious surface anticipated for each growth option, which generates runoff and picks up pollutants that can reach our rivers, lakes, and streams.



Support Our Communities

People said that cities and towns are important to them, and that vibrant and active town centers matter. One way this can happen is to direct growth inside communities instead of outside of them.

The priority was measured by looking at the amount of growth that occurs as infill development or redevelopment inside the community versus how much occurs in rural, undeveloped areas outside the community (greenfield development).



Cost of My Commute

Cost of my commute represents the out-of-pocket expense from getting from home to work. Typical costs include: vehicle purchase, vehicle maintenance, gas, parking, etc. Costs vary based on the number of vehicles in a family, daily travel needs and distances, and available modes of travel for our daily needs.

The priority was measured by the percentage of household income spent on transportation.



Work Closer to Home

People said the ability to work closer to home is important, and that is more likely to happen when a large mix of jobs is located next to a mix of housing choices.

The priority was measured by identifying the number of jobs and dwelling units within convenient travel distances.



More Housing Choices

People said that housing choices are important to them – being able to choose from options, sizes, and price points for stand-alone homes, townhomes, condominiums, apartments, and senior-living.

The priority was measured as the percentage of different housing choices available for the growth option.



Parks & Open Space

People said parks, greenways, nature preserves, ball fields, open space, and other natural assets are important to them.

The priority was measured by looking at the percentage of people who can live close to a park of some type.



Improved Air Quality

People said improved air quality (reduced pollutants in the air) is important to them.

The priority was measured by looking at the amount of carbon dioxide or nitrogen oxide that may be generated by motor vehicles for each of the growth scenarios.



Cost of Providing Services

People believe that controlling the cost of government is important, including the cost of growth associated with providing services for water, sewer, schools, parks, and transportation. Maximizing revenue generated from development helps offset the cost of providing services.

The priority was first measured by creating an index for the cost of growth compared to the revenue generated by growth. Results shared in the third round of community meetings or on MetroQuest were modified for this document because of new data available from the CONNECT Region's Return on Investment Study (revised April 10, 2014). New data available and county-level reporting included in the Primer document necessitated an emphasis on ROI statistics (vs. cost to serve statistics) for comparing the alternative growth scenarios.



Support Local Farms

People said preserving farmland and local farms is important to protect the beauty of the region and create jobs.

The priority was measured as the percentage of farmland saved under each growth option.

Growth Priorities for the CONNECT Region:

Top 5



Parks & Open Space



More Transportation Choices



Support our Communities



Support Local Farms



Cost of Providing Services

Other 5



Improved Water Quality



Improved Air Quality



Work Closer to Home



More Housing Choices



Cost of My Commute

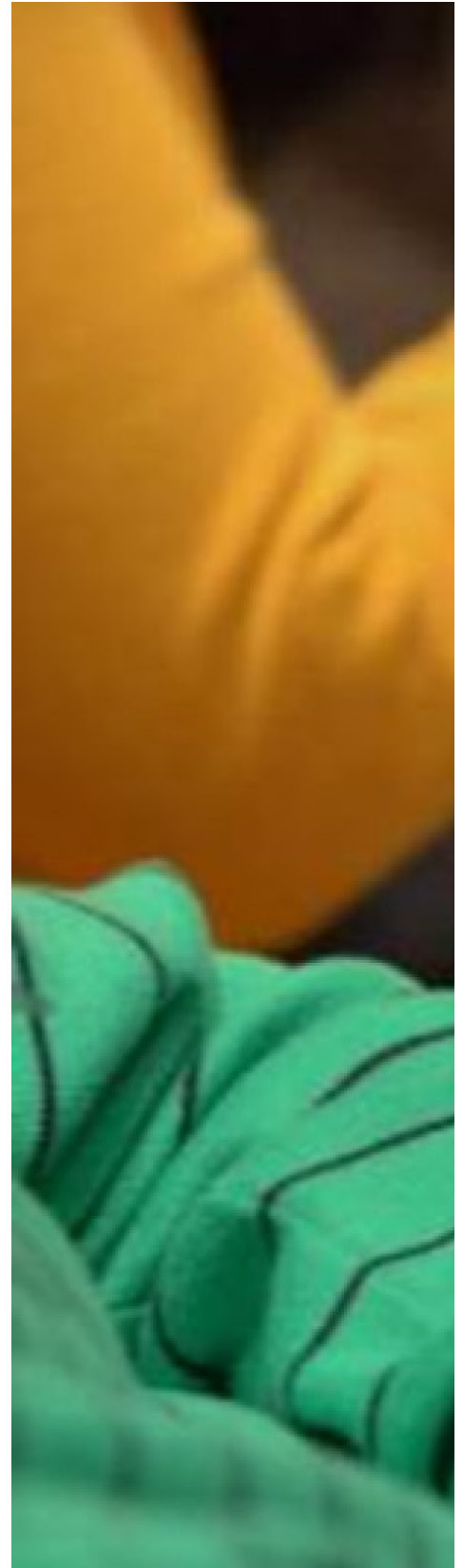
Regional Growth Scenarios

Four alternative growth scenarios were prepared for CONNECT Our Future based information collected throughout the planning process. Each scenario was different enough to pose real choices for how the region might develop under one or more planning initiatives. The four alternative growth scenarios include:

- *Maintain Suburban Focus*
- *Follow Community Plans*
- *Grow Cities, Towns, Centers & Transit*
- *Focus on Regional Transportation*

Each growth scenario used identical projections for population and number of jobs between 2010 and 2050. The number and mix of dwelling units in each scenario were different to account for competing development patterns and intensities or housing preferences represented in the scenarios.

A brief summary of each growth scenario is provided on pages 14-20. County-level details are provided in the next section of the document.





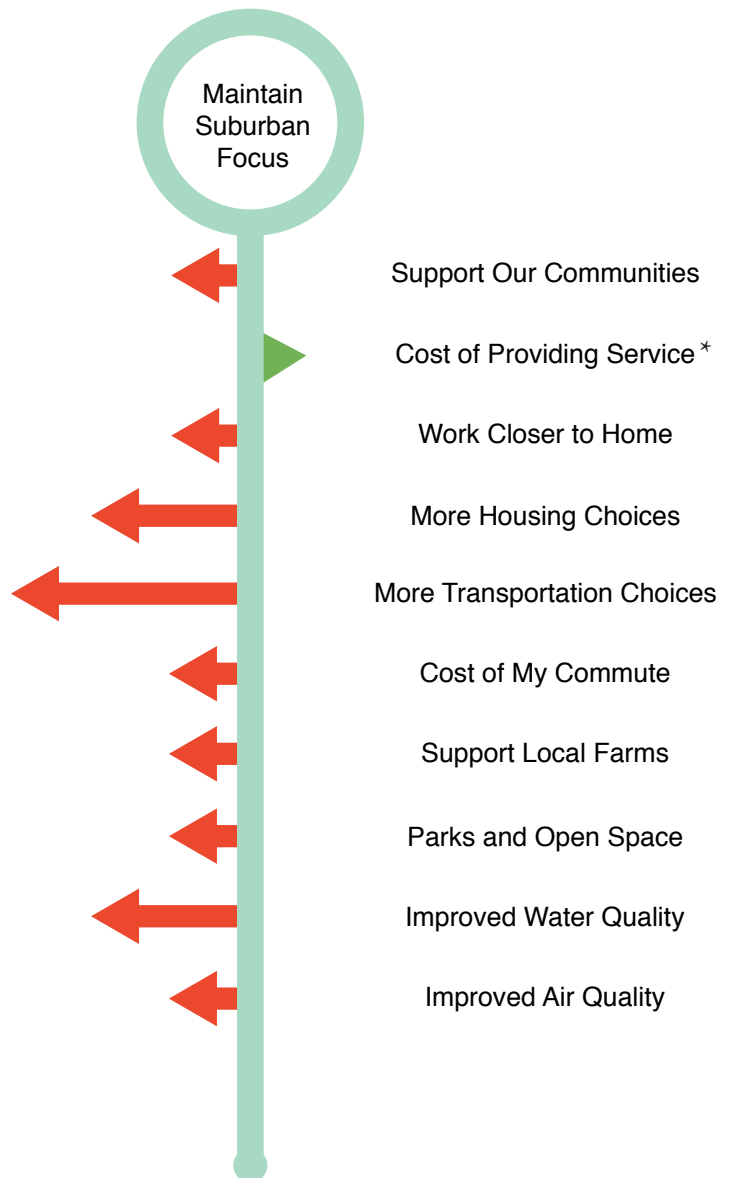
GROWTH OPTION 1:

Maintain Suburban Focus

The “maintain suburban focus” growth scenario shows how the region might develop if current zoning and land use practices are continued or if community plans are not followed. Most new residents will live in houses on larger lots outside of towns, with fewer condominiums, townhomes, and apartments available to choose from. Most people will need cars for their daily trips, because home, shopping, work, etc. are not located close together. The region’s urban areas will provide opportunities for people to use mass transit, walk, or bike from homes to nearby opportunities for work, play, parks, etc. Farms and open space in rural areas will be developed as expanding suburbs. Water, sewer, roads, schools, parks and other infrastructure will need to be expanded outward to support new development.

Scenario Highlights:

- Single-use, low-density development patterns spread throughout the region.
- Farmland preservation is not a priority for most counties in the region.
- Large-lot, single-family detached homes satisfyw most future demand.
- Cars are the primary mode of transportation to meet residents’ daily needs.
- Most employees still drive long distances to work, especially to Uptown Charlotte.
- Land held in the region for permanent open space remains relatively unchanged from today.
- The regional transportation system and water, sewer, park, and school district service areas will continue to expand to keep up with suburban growth.



Growth Forecast (2010 - 2050):

- Population – 1,809,400
- Dwelling Units – 733,259
- Employees – 873,112

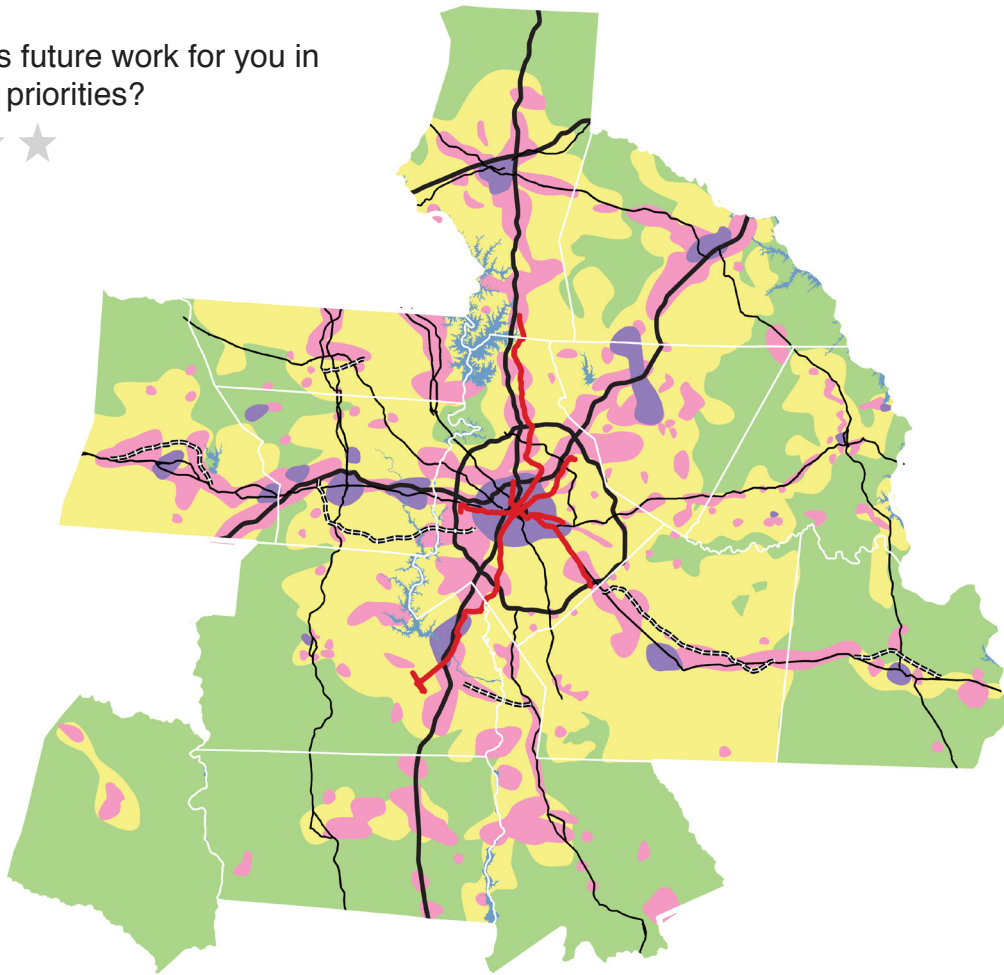
- Red Arrow: Growth scenario does not support the growth priority.
- Green Arrow: Growth scenario supports the growth priority.

*Note:

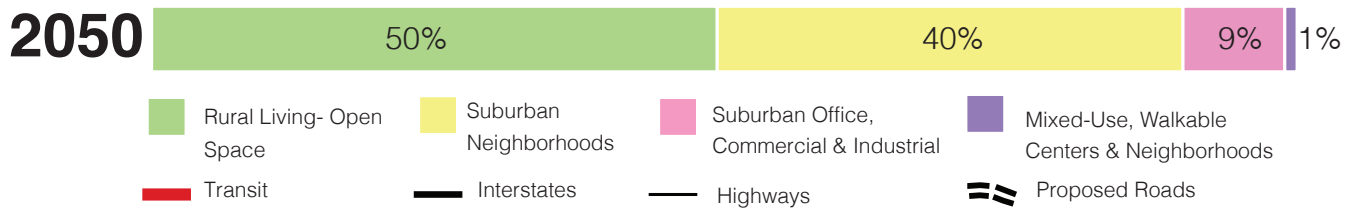
New data available from the CONNECT Region’s Return on Investment Study (revised April 10, 2014) and county-level reporting included in the Primer document necessitated an emphasis on ROI statistics (vs. cost to serve statistics) for comparing the alternative growth scenarios.

Community Comments

How does this future work for you in terms of your priorities?



Land Use Composition in the Region:



What People In the Region Said About the Scenario:

“I like not being crowded into urban areas. I am increasingly concerned with rising costs of services with rising tax rates. I believe people make better choices for themselves than government planning can. Plans lock you into patterns you may not want 10 years in the future and opens the door for political corruption.”

“Bad choice for more transportation options. Need more walkable communities w/o having to drive for everything.”

“No creo que hayan sufficient comercios”

“We have to preserve farmland and open spaces if we are to coexist and maintain any quality of life in Mecklenburg county and surrounds. I am very much against our previous patterns of suburban development and long commutes to work.”

“Presents challenges for families and individuals who lack transportation.”

“We need to address the cost of providing services, especially those that rely on technology. As a government-funded agency, this is becoming more and more of an issue as the population grows.”

GROWTH OPTION 2:

Follow Community Plans

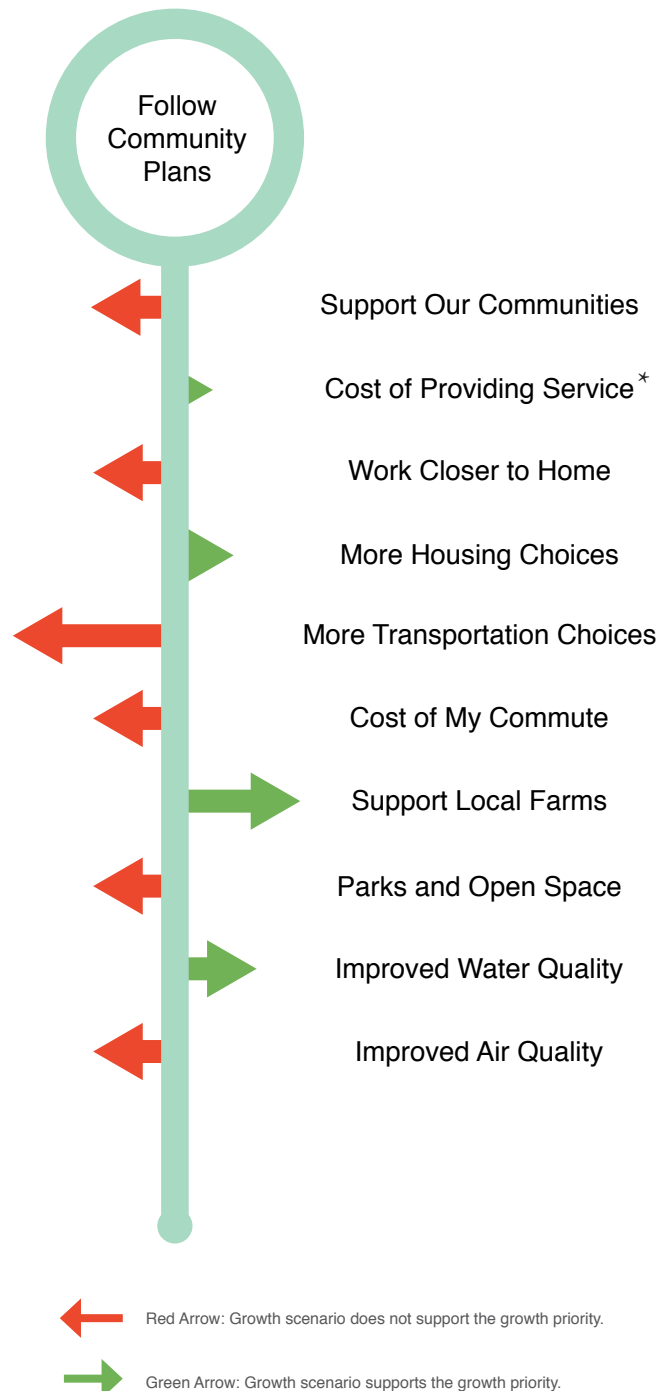
The “follow community plans” growth scenario shows how the region might develop if adopted community plans are followed. People in different parts of the region will experience growth in different ways. Residents within some communities will be able to walk, bike, or use transit to get from their homes to work or play, while others will enjoy a more suburban or rural lifestyle, greater distances between home, work and play, and greater reliance on a car. Some communities will shift their infrastructure investment to support “growth within”, while other communities will tend to invest more in infrastructure to support “outward growth.” Farmland will be preserved in some counties but not others, and housing choices will stay about the same as today.

Scenario Highlights:

- Some communities will focus their highest development densities and intensities in activity centers or along transportation corridors, while others will favor more single-use, low-density development patterns spreading out from existing urban or suburban areas.
- Farmland preservation is a priority for some counties in the region.
- New neighborhoods in defined activity centers focus on small-lot, single-family detached homes, townhomes, and condominiums, often mixed together. Large-lot, single-family detached homes are prevalent in more suburban or rural areas of the region.
- Cars are the primary mode of transportation to meet residents’ daily needs.
- Most employees still drive long distances to work, especially to Uptown Charlotte.
- A renewed interest in environmental stewardship slightly increases the amount of permanent open space in the region.
- Improvements to the transportation system and water, sewer, park, and school district infrastructure are concentrated in the long-term service areas envisioned in each community’s growth plans.

Growth Forecast (2010 - 2050):

- Population – 1,809,400
- Dwelling Units – 752,420
- Employees – 873,112

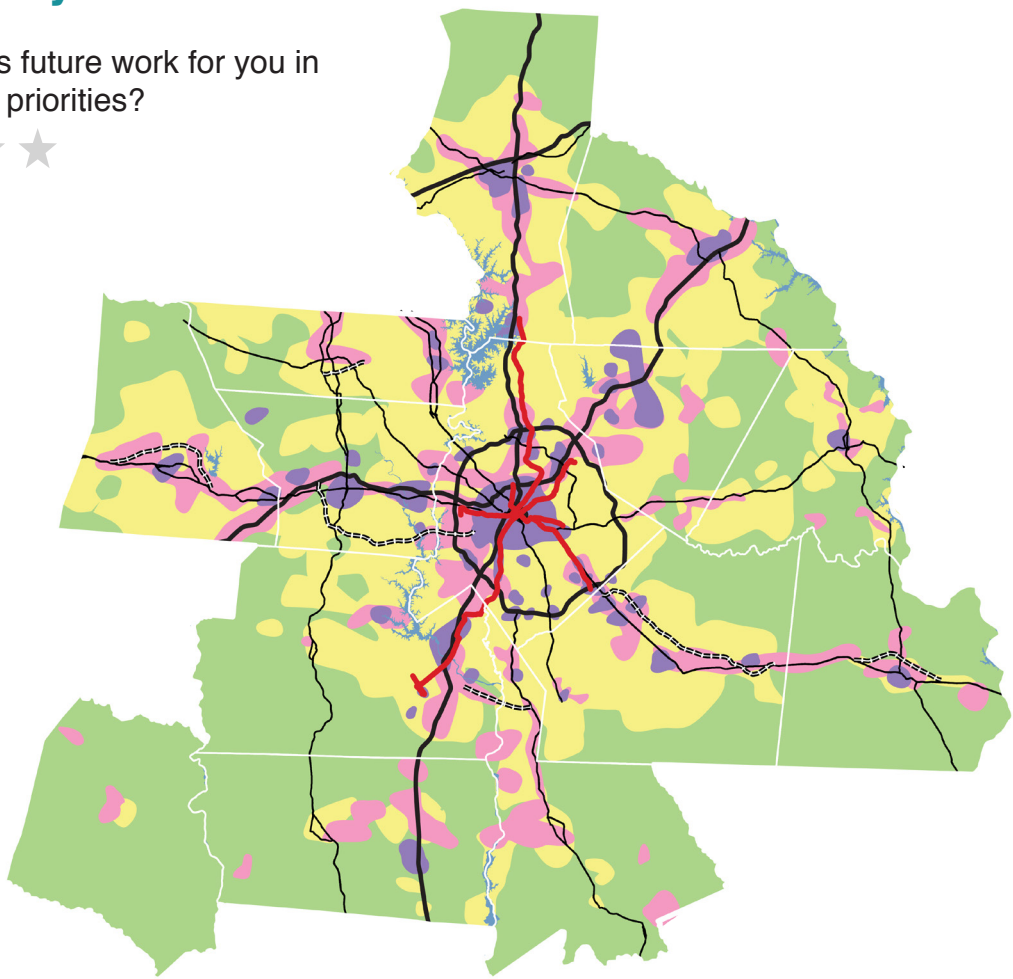


*Note:

New data available from the CONNECT Region’s Return on Investment Study (revised April 10, 2014) and county-level reporting included in the Primer document necessitated an emphasis on ROI statistics (vs. cost to serve statistics) for comparing the alternative growth scenarios.

Community Comments

How does this future work for you in terms of your priorities?



Land Use Composition in the Region:



What People In the Region Said About the Scenario:

- “This option is a bit more friendly to open space and farms, but still supports more suburban development and cars being driven into the city ruining our air quality.”

“I don’t want apartment complexes built in an area that has so many issues with school over crowding, traffic, and water recycling/ quality.”

“Environmental quality of clean air and water is important.”
- “Continue to connect outlying areas with the light rail transit system. If there was a station in Matthews, Monroe and Waxhaw, with service to Charlotte - that would be life-changing for commuters - for work, school, and entertainment - getting into the center city area without worry of driving/traffic and parking.”

“There has to be a balance between us and nature.”

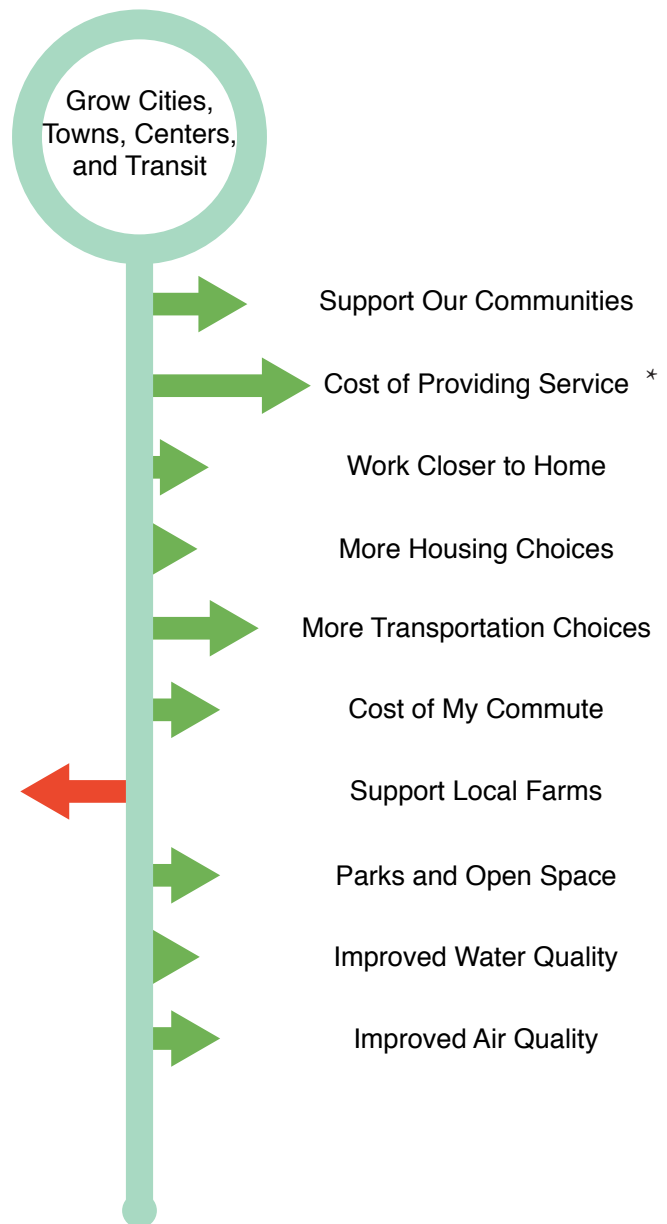
GROWTH OPTION 3:

Grow Cities, Towns, Centers and Transit

The “grow cities, towns, centers and transit” growth scenario shows how the region might develop using all the ideas that have emerged from the public throughout CONNECT. People throughout the region have more opportunities to live, work, shop, and play in existing cities or town, or in new activity centers in towns. These centers include parks and greenways, and getting around by walking, biking, or transit is easy. Centers along transit corridors are options for those who need to commute by rail from some counties, and other counties have express bus connections. A rural or suburban lifestyle is still available in every county, since land outside centers is used for open space, farmland, or rural living. Infrastructure investments focus mostly on “growth within,” or supporting a limited number of new centers in undeveloped areas.

Scenario Highlights:

- New growth is focused into compact, walkable activity centers concentrated along dedicated transit corridors (commuter rail, light rail, bus rapid transit, or express bus).
- All farmland is preserved in the region.
- New neighborhood design and housing choices favor a shift to condominiums, townhomes, and apartments to meet future demand.
- Mixed-use, walkable activity centers in key areas of the region significantly increases opportunities to link jobs and housing in close proximity.
- Daily travel needs are served by walking, biking, or transit within, and between, nearby activity centers.
- Interests in environmental stewardship increase significantly throughout the region to permanently preserve open space.
- Growth is focused into the existing regional transportation system and water, sewer, park, and school district service areas to the maximum extent possible.



Growth Forecast (2010 - 2050):

- Population – 1,809,400
- Dwelling Units – 849,856
- Employees – 873,112

- ← Red Arrow: Growth scenario does not support the growth priority.
- Green Arrow: Growth scenario supports the growth priority.

*Note:

New data available from the CONNECT Region's Return on Investment Study (revised April 10, 2014) and county-level reporting included in the Primer document necessitated an emphasis on ROI statistics (vs. cost to serve statistics) for comparing the alternative growth scenarios.

Community Comments

How does this future work for you in terms of your priorities?



Land Use Composition in the Region:



What People In the Region Said About the Scenario:

“This option focuses more on TOD and mass transit and much more supports my goals of more open space, concentrated development along the expanded mass transit system, fewer cars, more farms protected, etc.”

“We need to keep as many green spaces as possible and improve roads and commuting options moving forward.”

“What can be done to support local farms? They are a good thing!”

“This appears to be balanced and has kept living areas focused around work centers, keeping long commutes to a minimum reducing traffic.”

“Having the option to walk within your neighborhood to shopping, dining, entertainment - and have access to transit into the city - AWESOME.”

“I am surprised that “Grow Cities, Towns, Centers and Transit” appears very unsupportive of local farms relative to the community plan and regional transportation option”

GROWTH OPTION 4:

Focus on Regional Transportation

The “focus on regional transportation” growth scenario shows how the region might develop based on ideas from people who came to the 57 community growth workshops for CONNECT Our Future, with great interest in transit and transportation. Most new residents will live in the many activity centers in or near existing communities, with housing, work, and shopping options near each other. People are able to walk, bike, or use local bus service or transit to get around. Areas outside centers are preserved as farms or open space in most areas, although there are still many opportunities for suburban or rural living in most counties. Major investment in transit throughout the region means that people can travel between most counties using transit as well as roads, with local bus service available at their destinations. There is limited expansion of water and sewer systems outward, with more focus on supporting “growth within.”

Scenario Highlights:

- New growth is focused into compact, walkable activity centers identified throughout the region.
- Nearly all farmland is preserved in the region.
- A major shift in neighborhood design and housing choice favors an even split between single-family detached and condominiums, townhomes, and apartments to meet future demand.
- Daily travel needs are served by walking, biking, or transit within, and between, nearby activity centers.
- Mixed-use, walkable activity centers in key areas of the region significantly increases opportunities to link jobs and housing in close proximity.
- Interests in environmental stewardship increase throughout the region to permanently preserve open space.
- Improvements to the transportation system and water, sewer, park, and school district infrastructure are concentrated in the short-term service areas envisioned in each community’s growth plans.

Growth Forecast (2010 - 2050):

- Population – 1,809,400
- Dwelling Units – 847,491
- Employees – 873,112

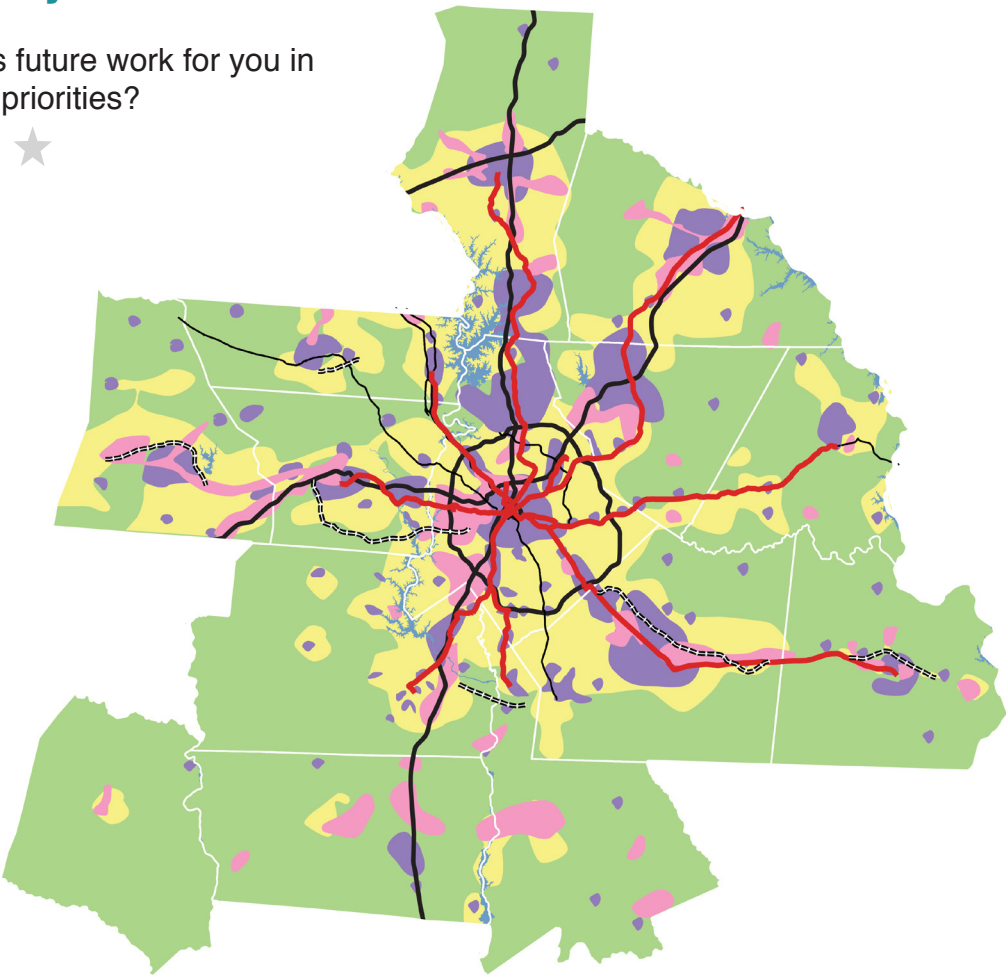


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Community Comments

How does this future work for you in terms of your priorities?



Land Use Composition in the Region:



What People In the Region Said About the Scenario:

- “Based on your analysis, this would be the best option. We must still continue to work to support our local communities and services.”

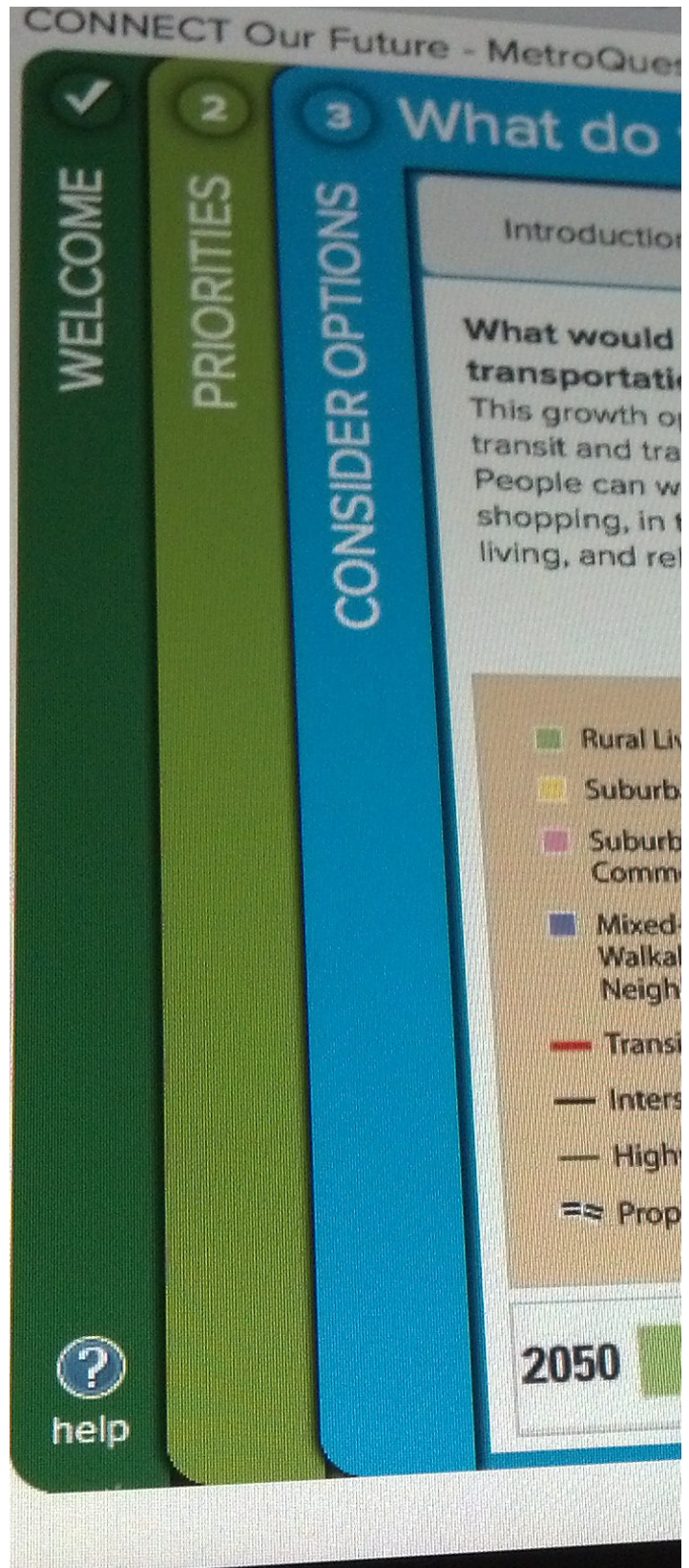
“The cost of transit infrastructure will be high, but ultimately worth the investment”

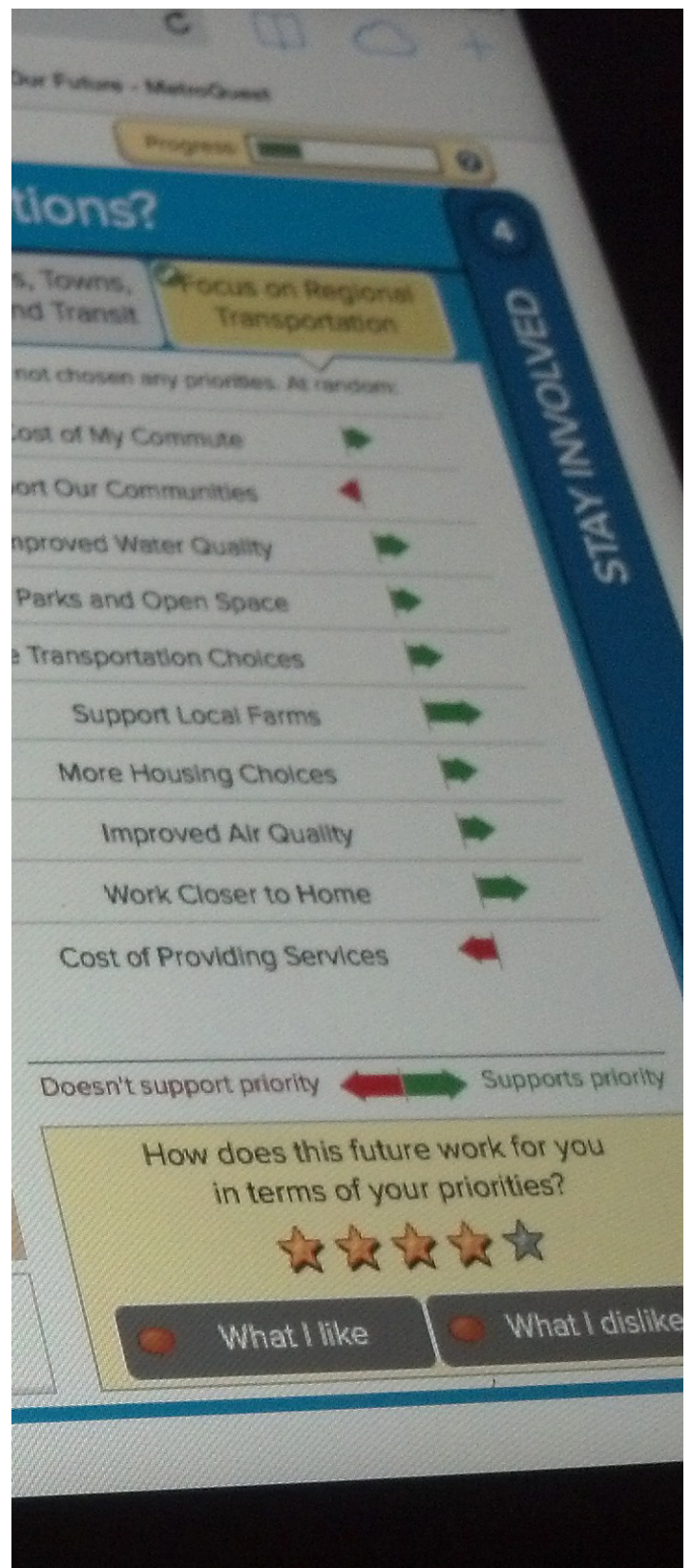
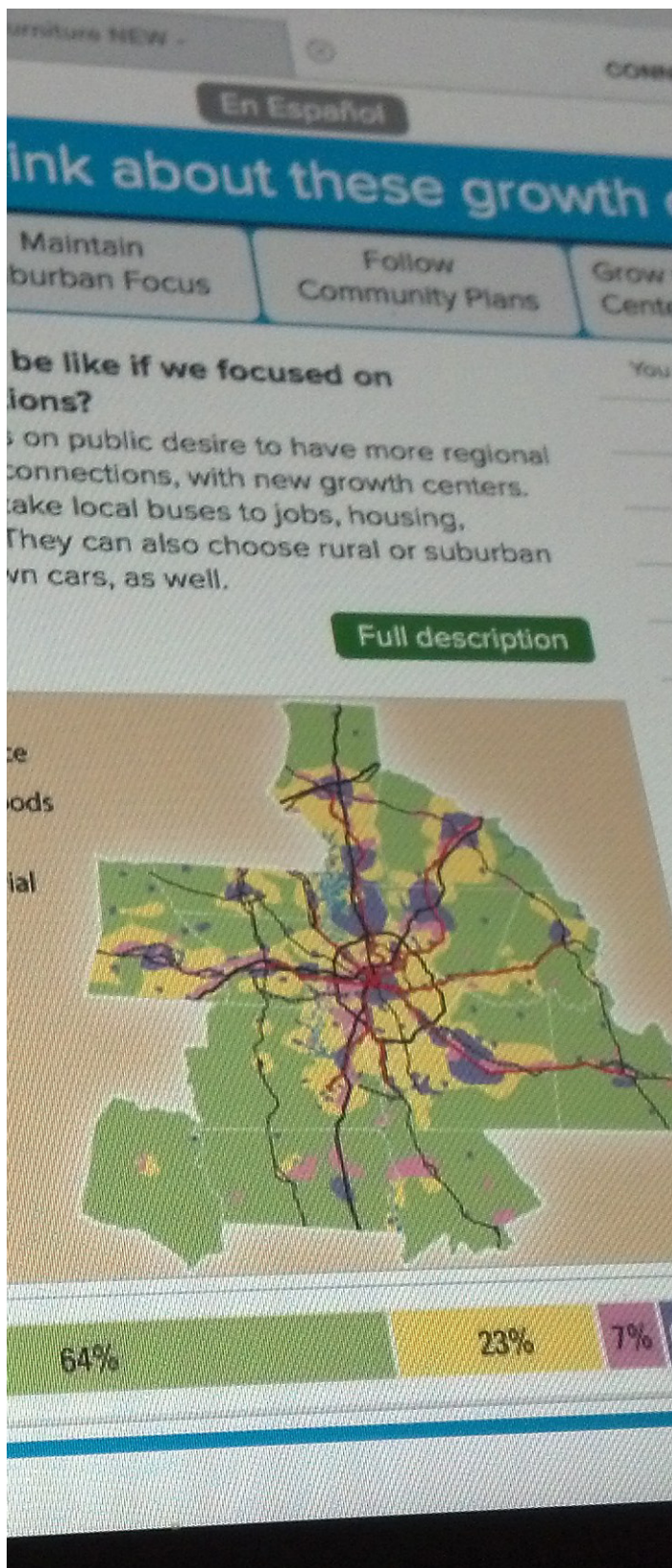
“This is great as well. There are more opportunities to work close to home which will decrease emissions, traffic and improve air quality.”
- “This option will constrain the cost for infrastructure like sewer and preserve more rural space.”

“This opens the mixed use areas to the small towns in counties instead of just the bigger areas. Seems this would reduce some of the transportation needs that these outer areas will need to get service.”

“Don’t like costs rising”

County-at-a-Glance





Mecklenburg County

“The stripped-out corridor approach that wrecks existing farms and feels overly compact, lack of rural living choices, and lack of defined nodes. Would want to see lots more pocket parks if this option is used, and tree planting and preservation.”

“Projects need to be delayed or even canceled if the surrounding infrastructure cannot handle the new development. Growth for the sake of growth is a policy for disaster.”

“We need more greenways to connect neighborhoods to each other and commercial space like shopping centers. Also need to keep in mind the importance of maintaining and creating more multi-use natural surface trails that local non profits have built so we can fight the obesity in this country by giving folks the opportunity to walk, hike, and mountain bike on these natural surface trails. It would also be nice to plan to connect greenways with parks, especially those with natural surface trails like the ones built and maintained by non profit volunteer organization the Tarheel Trailblazers.”

“Job growth should be our #1 priority.”

“Where in your list of priorities is compact, urban-style mixed uses? That is far more than a “housing choice” and it would be my top priority if it were listed.”

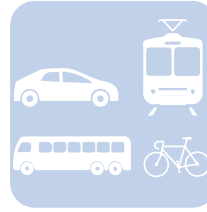
This section of the document summarizes results from the model indicators developed using CommunityViz scenario planning software for Mecklenburg County, and captures feedback from participants in the third round of community engagement aimed at vetting Mecklenburg County's preferences for the ten growth priorities and four alternative growth options. Data, thoughts, ideas, and opinions generated for the county are provided under the following headings: growth priorities, regional growth scenarios, side-by-side comparison of all ten growth priorities, and side-by-side comparison of individual growth priorities.

Growth Priorities

Ten important growth priorities for the CONNECT Region were identified in previous phases of the project. A definition for each is provided on pages 10-11 of the document. Participants in the third round of community engagement living or working in Mecklenburg County ranked the ten growth priorities (top five, others) for what they would like to protect, enhance, improve, or maximize as the county continues to grow.

Growth Priorities for Mecklenburg County:

Top 5



More Transportation Choices



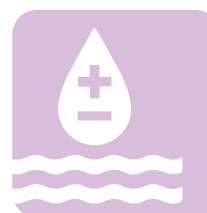
Parks & Open Space



Support our Communities



Improved Air Quality

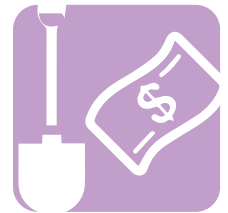


Improved Water Quality

Other 5



Support Local Farms



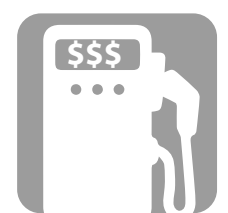
Cost of Providing Services



Work Closer to Home



More Housing Choices



Cost of My Commute

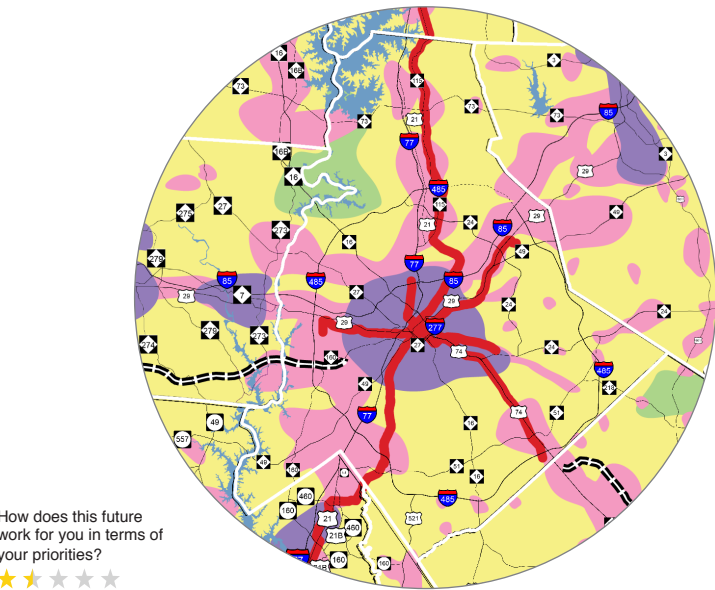
* Note:

Results shared in the third round of community meetings or on MetroQuest for the Cost of Providing Services growth priority were modified for this document because of new data available from the CONNECT Region's Return on Investment Study (revised April 10, 2014). New data available and county-level reporting included in the Primer document necessitated an emphasis on ROI statistics (vs. cost to serve statistics) for comparing the alternative growth scenarios.

Comparison of Alternative Growth Scenarios

Maintain Suburban Focus

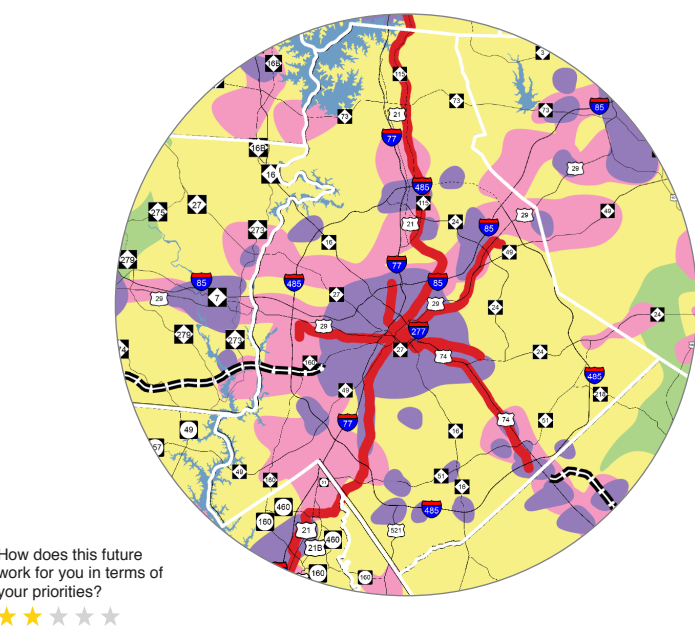
The “maintain suburban focus” growth option shows how the region might develop if current zoning and land use practices are continued or if community plans are not followed.



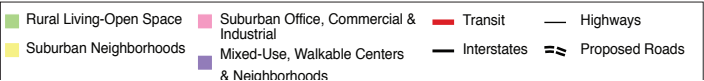
Light Red/Green Arrows: Indicator Performance at Regional Level
Red Arrow: Growth scenario does not support the growth priority.
Green Arrow: Growth scenario supports the growth priority.

Follow Community Plans

The “follow community plans” growth option shows how the region might develop if adopted community plans are followed.

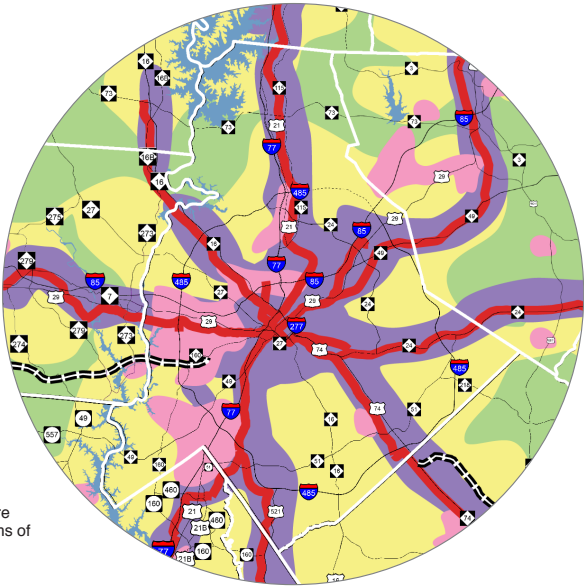


Light Red/Green Arrows: Indicator Performance at Regional Level
Red Arrow: Growth scenario does not support the growth priority.
Green Arrow: Growth scenario supports the growth priority.



Grow Cities, Towns, Centers, and Transit

The “grow cities, towns, centers and transit” growth option shows how the region might develop using all the ideas that have emerged from the public throughout CONNECT. People throughout the region have more opportunities to live, work, shop, and play in existing cities or town, or in new activity centers in towns.



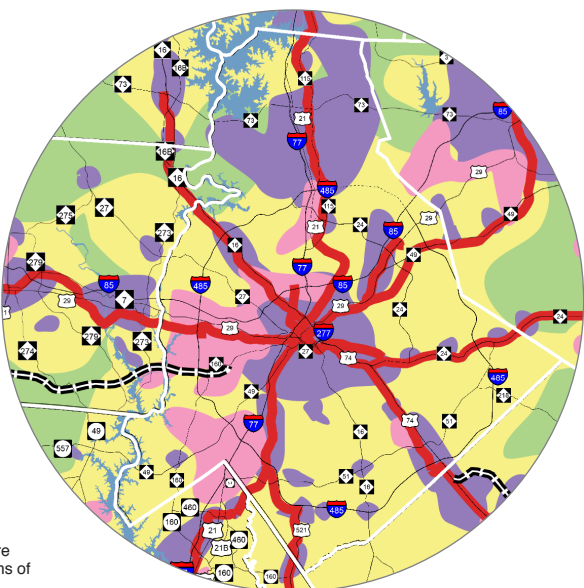
How does this future work for you in terms of your priorities?

★★★★★



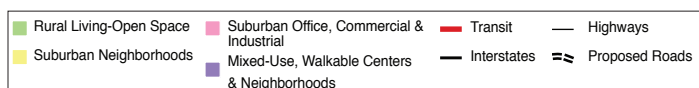
Focus on Regional Transportation

The “focus on regional transportation” growth option shows how the region might develop based on ideas of people who came to the 57 community growth workshops for CONNECT Our Future, with great interest in transit and transportation. Most new residents will live in the many activity centers in or near existing communities, with housing, work, and shopping options near each other.



How does this future work for you in terms of your priorities?

★★★★★



Consumer Reports

- = Strongly Supports the Growth Priority
- ◐ = Somewhat Supports the Growth Priority
- ◑ = Negatively Affects the Growth Priority
- = Does Not Support the Growth Priority

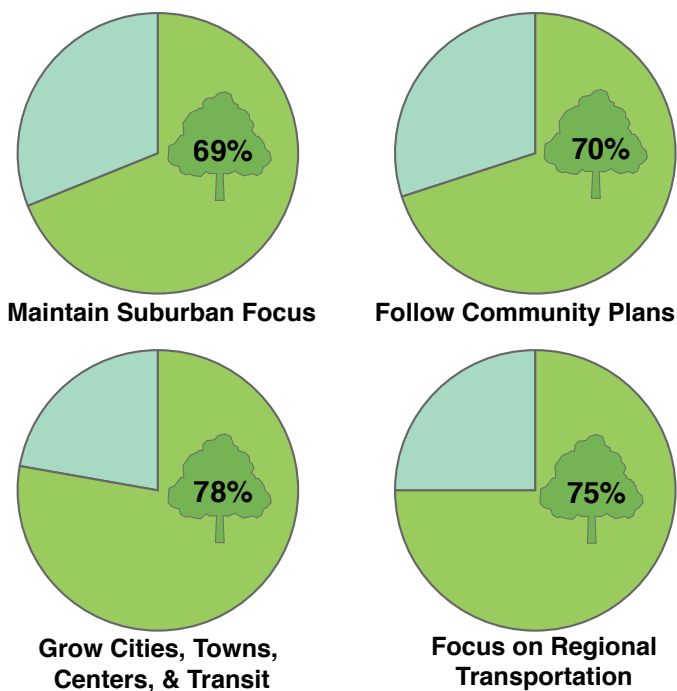
	Parks & Open Space	Improved Water Quality	More Transportation Choices
Anson County			
Maintain Suburban Focus	◑	◐	○
Follow Community Plans	◑	◐	○
Grow Cities, Towns, Centers & Transit	◑	◑	●
Focus on Regional Transportation	◐	◐	◑
Cabarrus County			
Maintain Suburban Focus	◑	◑	○
Follow Community Plans	◑	◐	◑
Grow Cities, Towns, Centers & Transit	◐	◐	●
Focus on Regional Transportation	◐	◐	◐
Cleveland County			
Maintain Suburban Focus	◑	◑	○
Follow Community Plans	◑	◑	○
Grow Cities, Towns, Centers & Transit	◐	◐	◐
Focus on Regional Transportation	◐	◐	●
Gaston County			
Maintain Suburban Focus	◑	◑	◑
Follow Community Plans	◑	◐	◑
Grow Cities, Towns, Centers & Transit	◐	◐	●
Focus on Regional Transportation	◐	◐	◐
Iredell County			
Maintain Suburban Focus	◑	◑	○
Follow Community Plans	◑	◐	◑
Grow Cities, Towns, Centers & Transit	◐	◐	●
Focus on Regional Transportation	◐	◐	◐
Lincoln County			
Maintain Suburban Focus	◑	◑	○
Follow Community Plans	◑	◐	○
Grow Cities, Towns, Centers & Transit	◐	◐	●
Focus on Regional Transportation	◐	◐	◐
Mecklenburg County			
Maintain Suburban Focus	◑	◐	○
Follow Community Plans	◑	◐	◑
Grow Cities, Towns, Centers & Transit	◐	◑	●
Focus on Regional Transportation	◐	◑	◐
Rowan County			
Maintain Suburban Focus	◑	◑	○
Follow Community Plans	◑	◑	○
Grow Cities, Towns, Centers & Transit	◐	◐	●
Focus on Regional Transportation	◑	◐	◐
Stanly County			
Maintain Suburban Focus	◑	◑	○
Follow Community Plans	◑	◐	○
Grow Cities, Towns, Centers & Transit	◑	◐	●
Focus on Regional Transportation	◐	◐	◑
Union County, NC			
Maintain Suburban Focus	◑	◑	○
Follow Community Plans	◑	◐	○
Grow Cities, Towns, Centers & Transit	◐	◐	●
Focus on Regional Transportation	◐	◐	●
State of North Carolina			
Maintain Suburban Focus	◑	◑	○
Follow Community Plans	◑	◐	◑
Grow Cities, Towns, Centers & Transit	◐	◑	●
Focus on Regional Transportation	◐	◐	◐

Improved Air Quality	Work Closer to Home	More Housing Choices	Support Our Communities	Cost of Providing Services	Cost of My Commute	Support Local Farms
○	○	○	○	○	○	◐
○	○	◐	○	◐	○	●
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Side by Side Comparison of Individual Priority Growth Indicators:

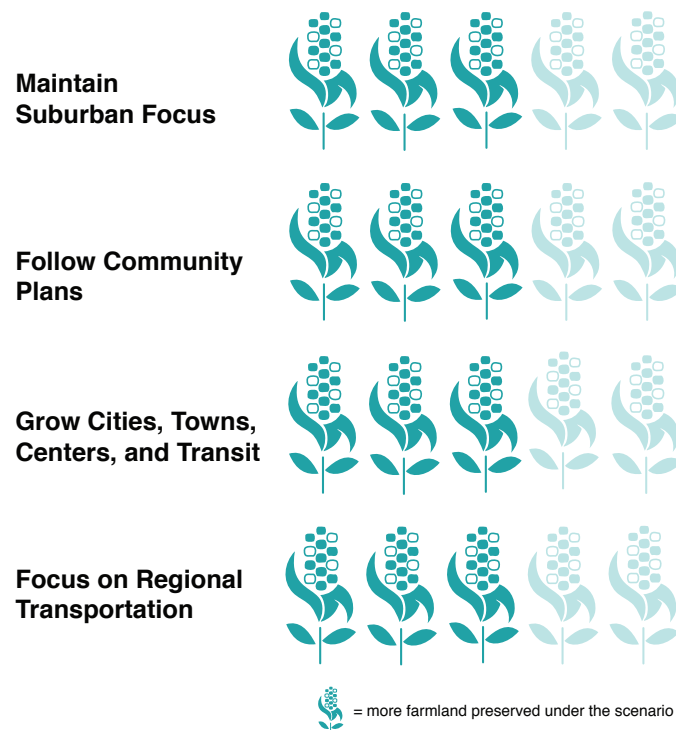
01. Parks and Open Space:

Percentage of Households Close to Existing Parks



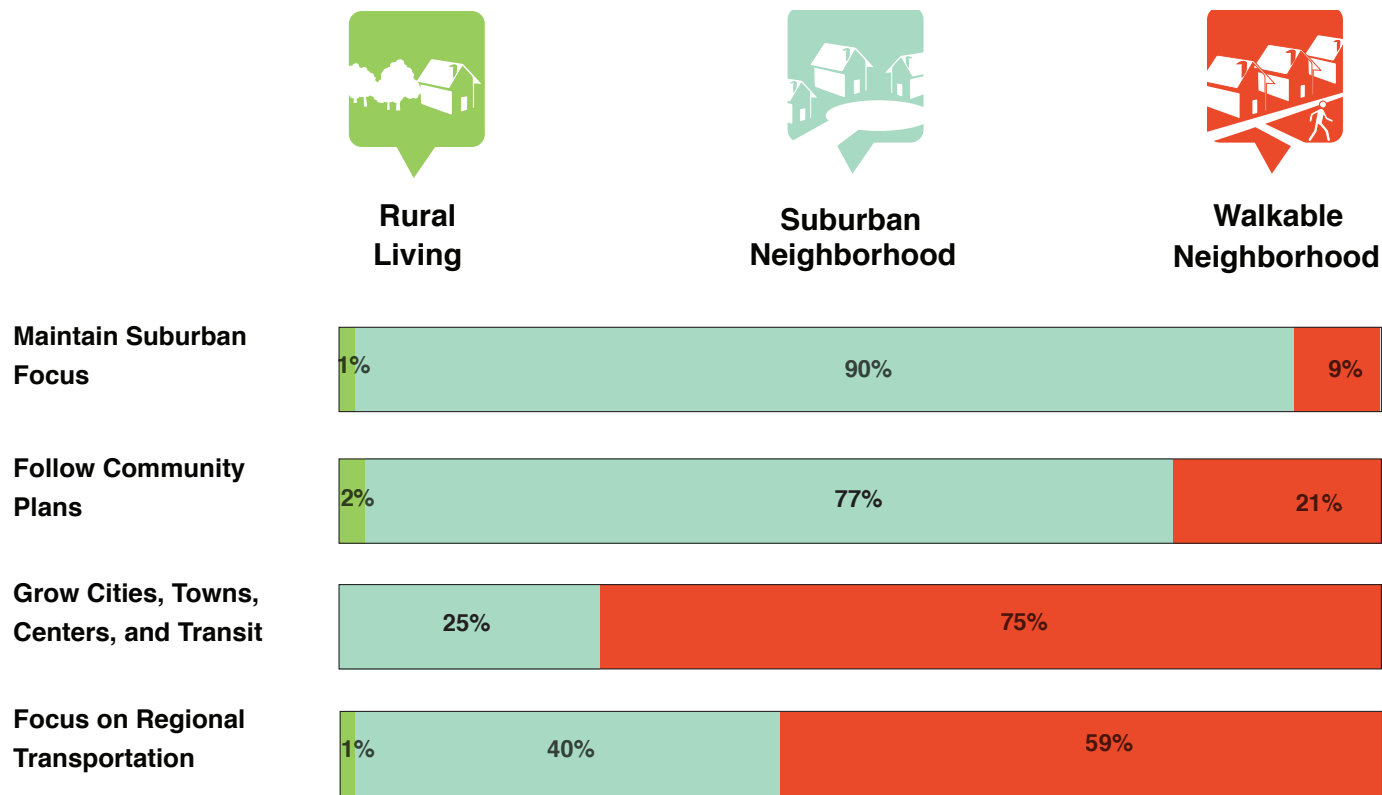
02. Support Local Farms:

Impact of Farmland in the Planning Horizon

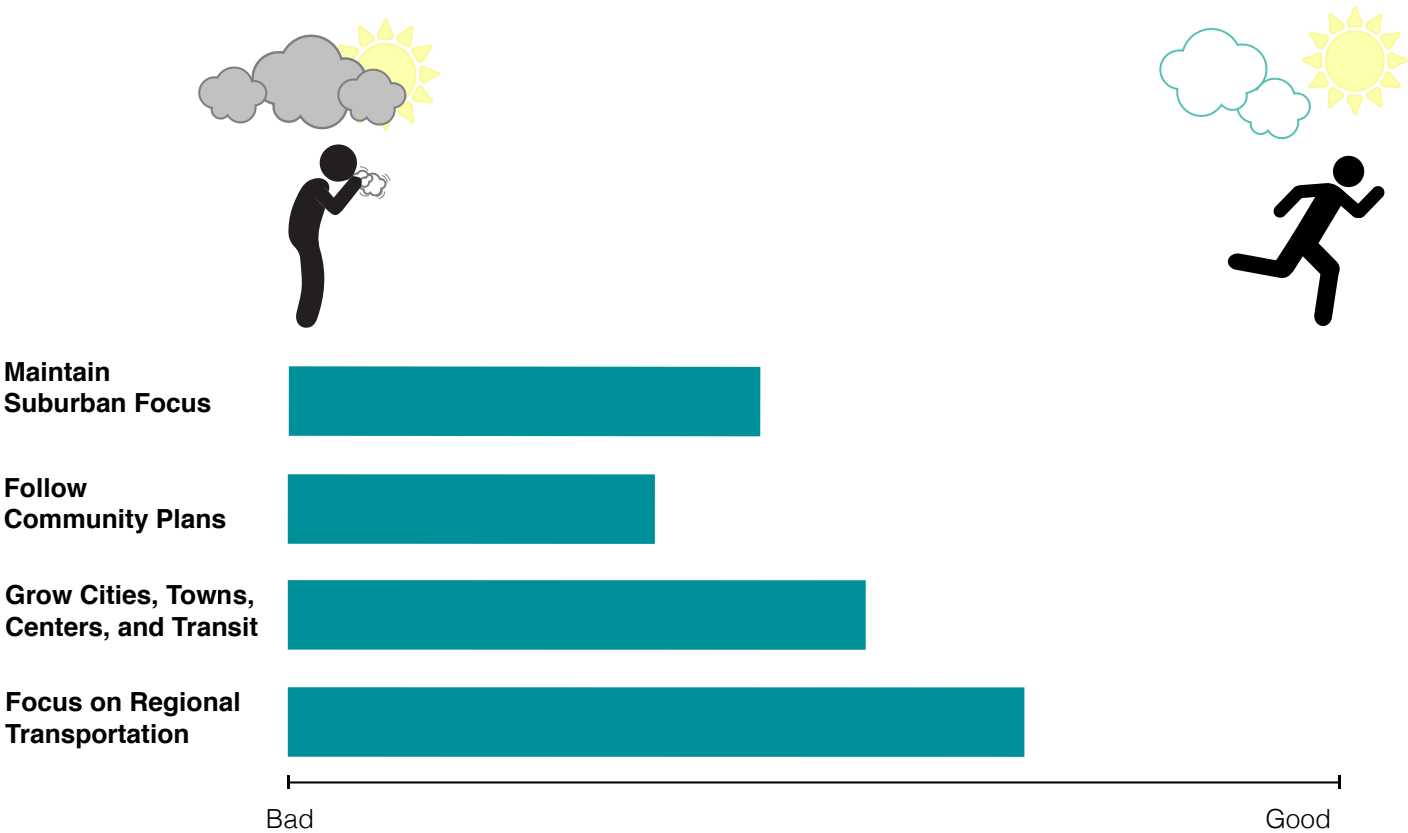


03. More Housing Choices:

For New Residences

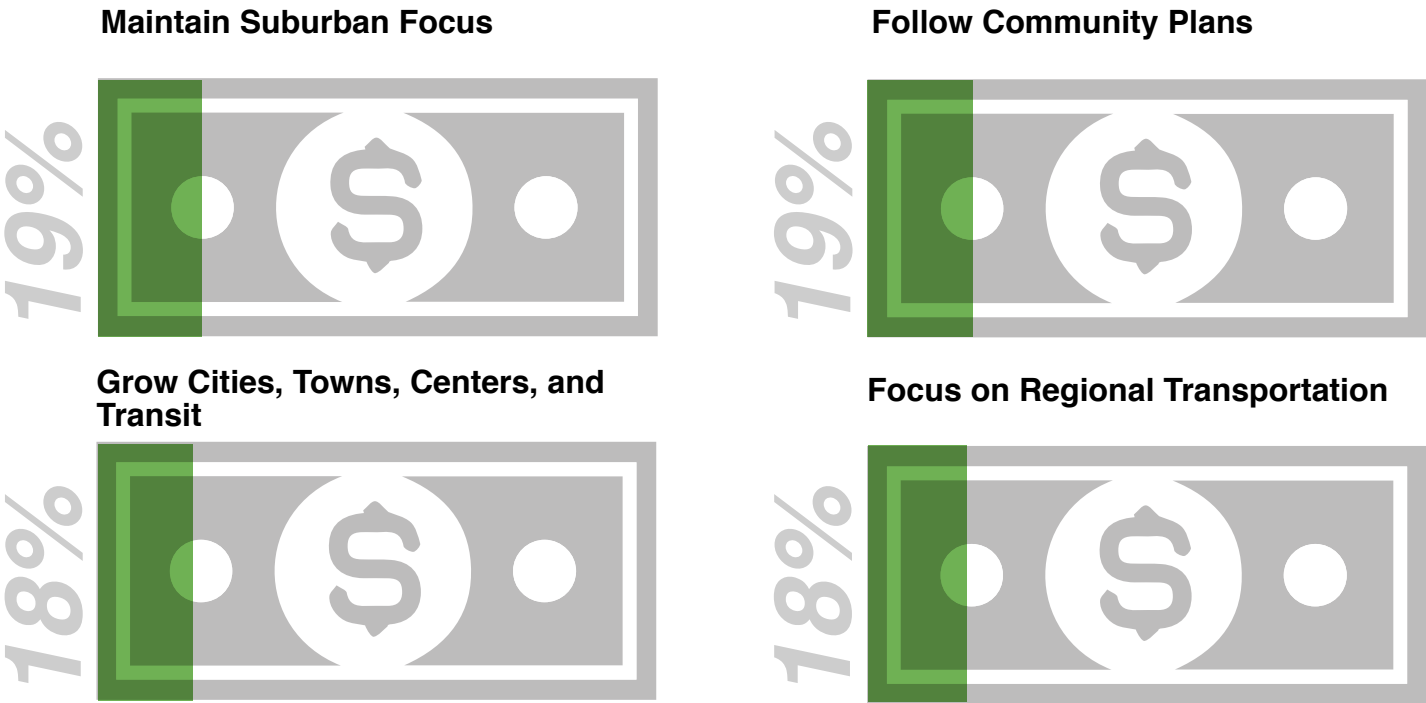


04. Improved Air Quality:



05. Cost of My Commute:

Percentage of Dual Income Household Income Spent on Transportation



06. Support Our Communities:

New Development Footprint Infill vs. Greenfield

Maintain Suburban Focus

43%

47%

53%

Follow Community Plans

42%

47%

53%

Grow Cities, Towns, Centers, & Transit

52%

28%

72%

Focus on Regional Transportation

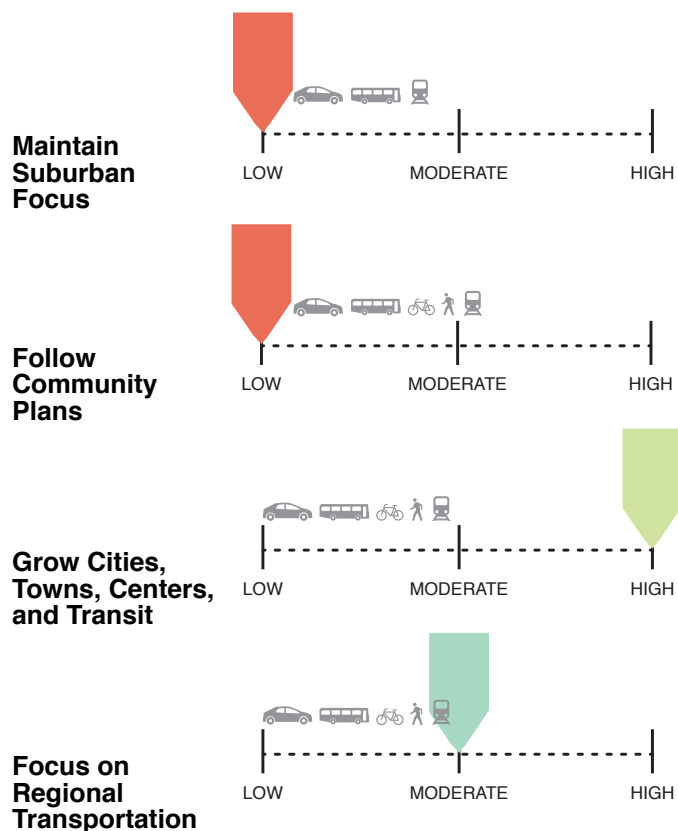
46%

43%

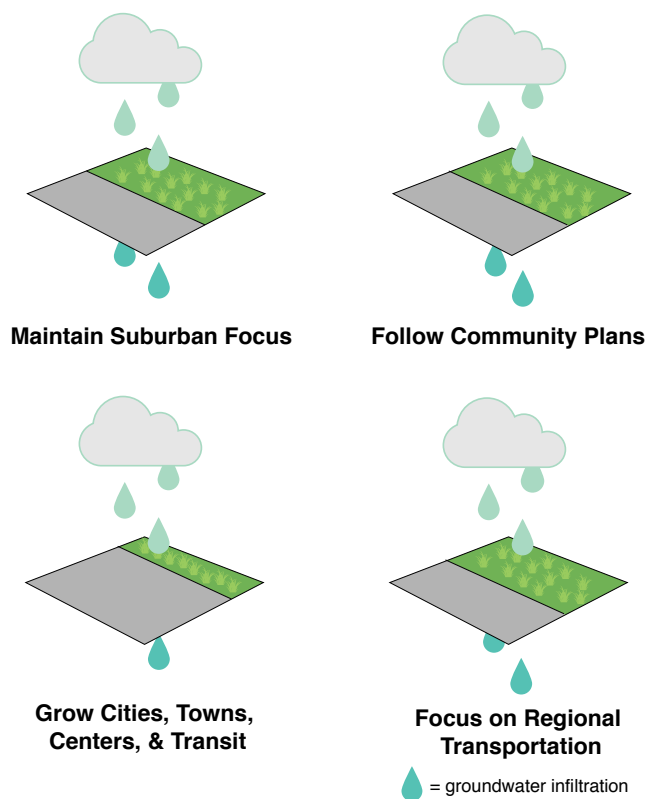
57%



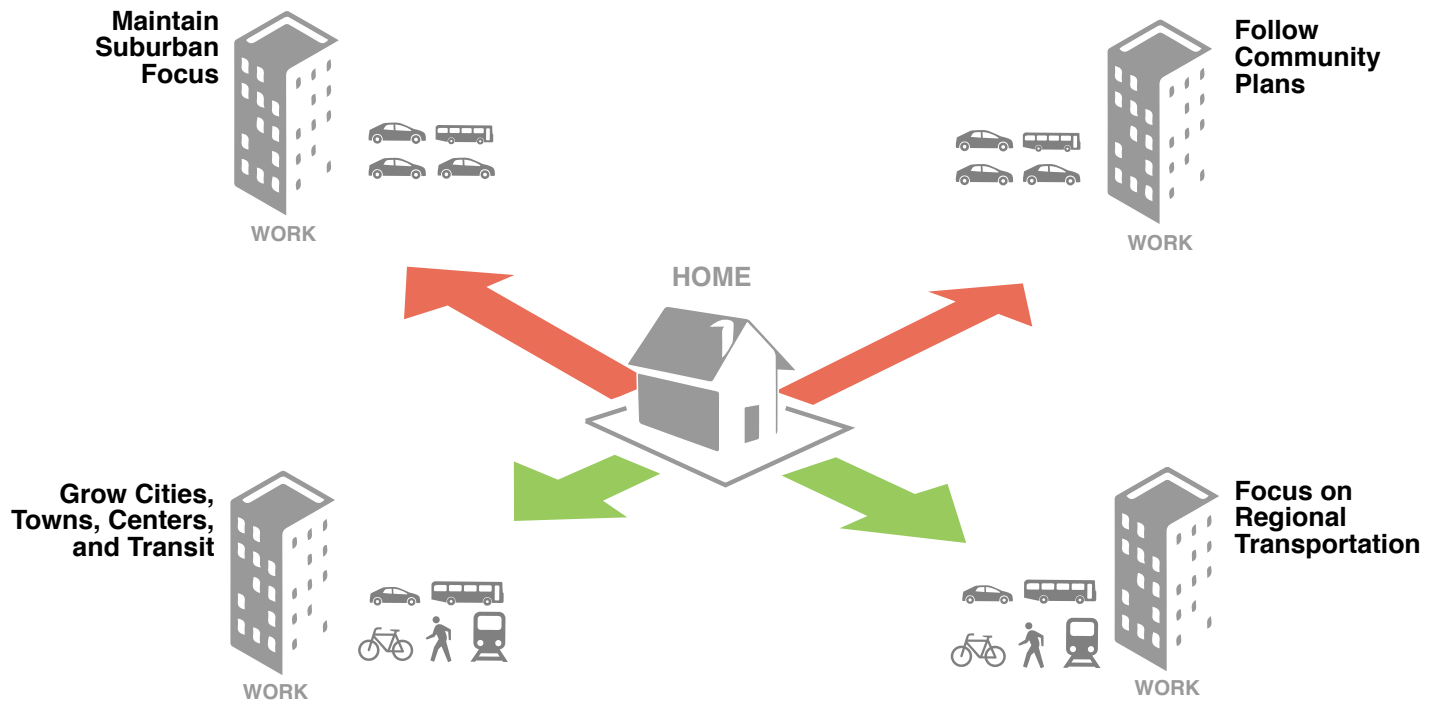
07. More Transportation Choices:



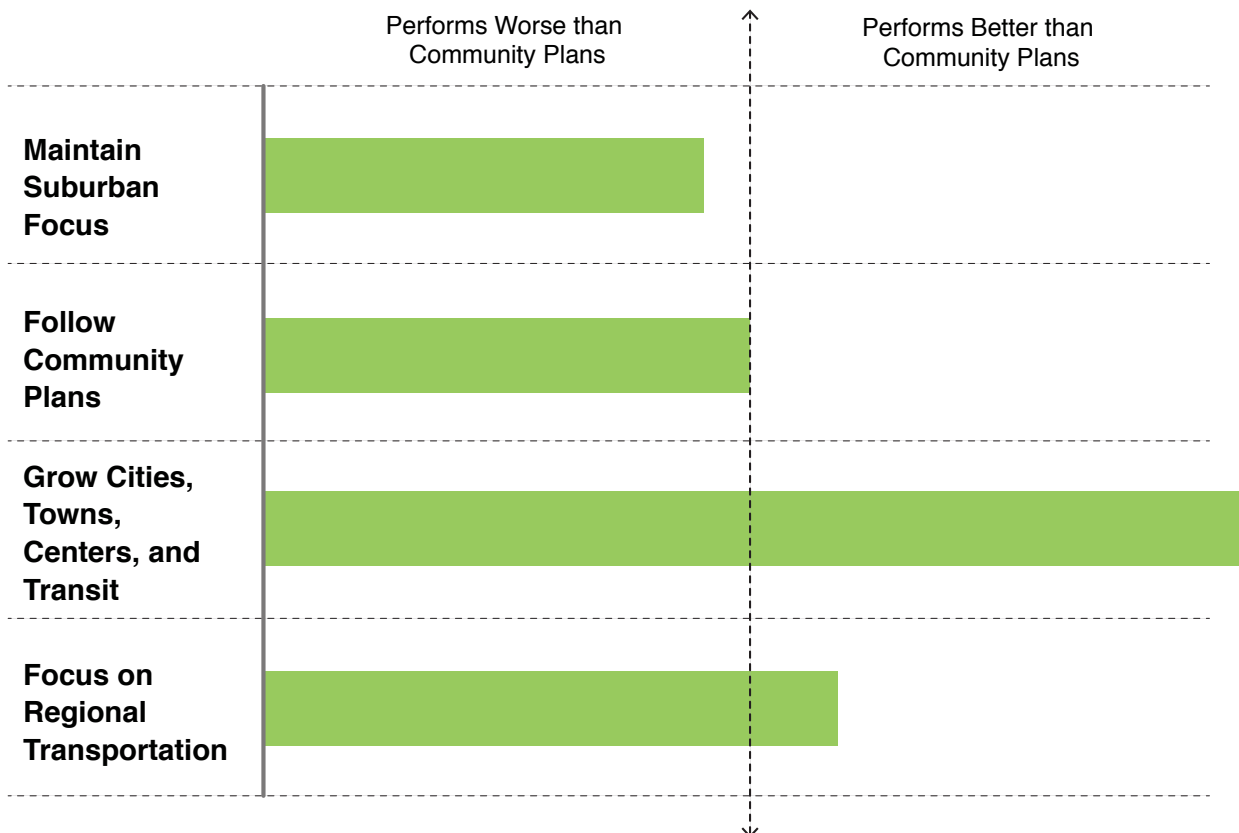
08. Improved Water Quality:



09. Work Close to Home:



10. Cost of Providing Services*:



* Note:

New data available from the CONNECT Region's Return on Investment Study (revised April 10, 2014) and county-level reporting included in the Primer document necessitated an emphasis on ROI statistics (vs. cost to serve statistics) for comparing the alternative growth scenarios.

Next Steps

Thoughts, opinions, and priorities from the discussion at each of the fourteen county-level consortium meetings will guide the development of a preferred growth scenario, which most likely will represent a combination of the strengths from two or more of the alternative growth scenarios presented in the Primer document. The preferred growth scenario will be tested in CommunityViz, and the results shared with the CONNECT Consortium Program and Policy Forums before endorsing a growth framework for the fourteen-county region in July 2014.

Please follow us on Facebook, Twitter, or e-newsletter for up-to-date information about next steps in the scenario planning process. 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.

“Great options. I agree that there will be most likely a hybrid between the options. Personally option 3 and 4 may be a good combo.”

“Disabled housing choices, need more scattered housing, more affordable housing.”

“As a community we need to come together to make the change we want to see.”

“I would vote 5 stars for #4 instead of 4 stars if there were more support of local communities.”

“I would like to see more emphasis on the travel industry. Scenic by-ways, signs to attractions, emphasis on downtowns. Protection of scenic views with planning for management of billboards and advertisements. “

