

# Phase I Report

The CONNECT Our Future leadership team designed Phase I to engage the public in a vibrant regional planning process and to collect demographically representative data that will inform later phases of CONNECT. Phase I focused on inclusion, diversity and the richness of an ongoing conversation with residents of the 14-county CONNECT region.

“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 Lee Institute.

 THE LEE INSTITUTE  
*Collaborating for strong communities.*

The Lee Institute, a non-profit consulting practice based in Charlotte, NC, prepared this guide. The mission of The Lee Institute is to serve and strengthen organizations and individuals who share a commitment to building great communities. The Lee Institute serves as the public engagement consultants for the CONNECT Our Future project. For more information about The Lee Institute, visit [www.leeinstitute.org](http://www.leeinstitute.org)

# CONTENTS

## Overview of CONNECT Our Future

Goals .....	1
Project Plan and Timeline .....	1
The Partners for Public Engagement.....	2
Foundational Principles of Public Engagement.....	2
The Overall Goals for Public Engagement for CONNECT Our Future.....	2
A Public Engagement Plan For Phase I .....	3

## Purpose of Phase One

Introduce and Educate About CONNECT Our Future .....	4
Ground the CONNECT Process in Shared Values and Priorities .....	4

## Methodology

Public Engagement & Inclusivity Work Groups	
Regional Public Engagement Work Group .....	5
Inclusivity Team.....	5
Public Engagement Partners.....	5
Development of Research Questions and Demographic Form	
Research Questions .....	6
Demographic Information Form.....	6
Suite of Engagement Opportunities	
Open Houses.....	7
Small Groups .....	7
Online Surveys.....	8
Removing Barriers.....	8
Outreach Strategy .....	8
Total Participation.....	9
Analysis of Responses .....	9

## Results

Total Participation.....	11
Demographic Distribution	
Geography .....	11
Age .....	11
Gender .....	11
Education & Income .....	11

Race/Ethnicity .....	11
Employment .....	11
Findings	
Statistical Significance.....	12
Findings by Question .....	12
Differences by County	
Anson County, NC .....	14
Cabarrus County, NC .....	14
Chester County, SC .....	14
Cleveland County, NC.....	15
Gaston County, NC.....	15
Iredell County, NC.....	15
Lancaster County, SC.....	15
Lincoln County, NC.....	16
Mecklenburg County, NC.....	16
Rowan County, NC.....	16
Stanly County, NC .....	16
Union County, NC.....	17
Union County, SC.....	17
York County, SC .....	17
Youth Voice .....	17
Super Themes .....	18

## Appendices

Appendix A: Public Engagement Team Charter.....	19
Appendix B: Inclusivity Team Charter.....	23
Appendix C: Small Group Response Form: What Matters for the Future.....	26
Appendix D: Demographic Response Form.....	29
Appendix E: Venues and Dates.....	31
Appendix F: Number of Participants by Venue and County ....	36
Appendix G: Demographic Report.....	37
Appendix H: Theming Report.....	42
Appendix I: County Reports .....	73
Appendix J: Youth Report.....	129



Vibrant Communities – Robust Region

## Overview of CONNECT Our Future

In February of 2012, CONNECT Our Future, a project of Centralina Council of Governments in North Carolina and the Catawba Regional Council of Governments in South Carolina, was launched with a visionary grant of \$4.9 million by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

CONNECT Our Future is a collaborative, interactive, data driven approach to setting the 14 county, bi-state region surrounding Charlotte, NC on a path for successful growth. The Charlotte metropolitan area ranks 23rd largest in the US and had a 2012 population of more than 2.2 million. Projections show that by 2050, an additional 1.8 million people and 860,000 more jobs will come to this region, nearly doubling it in size.

This collaborative effort includes 119 counties and municipalities and some 31 partners in the for-profit and non-profit community. There are 9 workgroups that have been hard at work for the last 18 months focused on such critical areas as economic development, housing and energy.

One of the primary attributes of the vision for CONNECT Our Future is a continuing investment and commitment to engaging people in meaningful decision making and ensuring that the ultimate path represents the aspirations of the people of the region.

### Goals

The goals for CONNECT Our Future are:

- Prepare for growth, yet sustain quality communities;
- Meet infrastructure needs at affordable cost (water/sewer, transportation, waste management);
- More jobs and associated workforce training;
- Housing that attracts and retains a range of residents;
- Revitalize commercial, industrial, downtown areas.

The Charlotte region is the largest metropolitan region in U.S. that does not yet have a collaborative approach to growth. U.S. regions with shared plans are better equipped to:

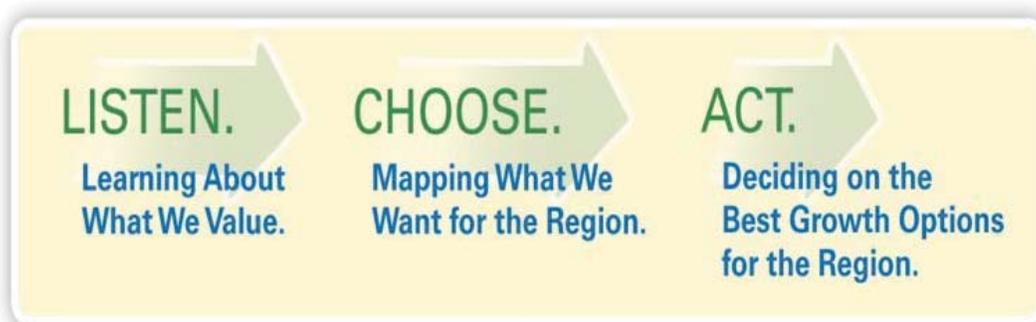
- Help communities address key needs;
- Compete for jobs and make sound economic development investments;
- Initiate large-scale regional projects;
- Conserve valuable resources and funds;
- Qualify for federal funding options.

### Project Plan and Timeline

The overall plan for CONNECT Our Future is organized in three distinct phases of public engagement (see image at bottom of page):

**Phase 1: Values** – Small groups, Open Houses and Online Responses

- "What do you want to see more of - what do you treasure in your community?"



### Phase 2: Directions - Reality Check and Community Growth Workshops

- "What are the choices we can make to arrive at the future we want? How do different choices impact the future?"

**Phase 3:** Decisions - Feedback on alternative futures and other activities

### The Partners for Public Engagement

- The Lee Institute
- Carolina PR
- JMS Communications and Research
- The Latin American Chamber of Commerce
- Sustain Charlotte

### Foundational Principles of Public Engagement

Throughout Phase I, the Lee Institute and the CONNECT team designed all engagement opportunities around six core principles:

- Residents are owners of the community;
- Resident engagement is a condition of effective governance;
- Everyone must have ample opportunity to engage;
- High tech and high-touch engagement are both vitally important;
- Engagement options must be tailored and targeted to the convenience of participants;
- Outreach and education must be sustained through clear, frequent communication loops.

These principles build upon the Lee Institute's extensive experience with resident engagement and outreach initiatives, including public engagement projects for thousands of residents over the last decade. Key learnings that shaped the design of each CONNECT activity included the knowledge that to be fully engaged, people want:

- To be asked to participate;
- Multiple, convenient ways to engage;
- Safe, convenient places to gather;
- To connect with people in person on meaningful

issues;

- To believe their involvement will affect change they can witness;
- Local government to bring people together.

With these goals and principles firmly established in early 2012, the CONNECT team next created a wide-ranging suite of inclusive engagement options for residents of the 14-county region.

### The Overall Goals for Public Engagement for CONNECT Our Future

By the completion of the 3-year process to develop and adopt the CONNECT Our Future Regional Strategic Framework, we will have:

- Engaged some 6,500 persons representing the full diversity of the region's population through at least one of a suite of public engagement tools that will be used;
- Included people who are not typically involved in such planning efforts;
- Explained through a variety of interactive opportunities the goals, overall plan and context for CONNECT Our Future as a long-term regional effort;
- Improved understanding among the public concerning issues of growth, development, and the interrelationships among the built and natural environments and the long-term results those interrelationships produce;
- Reflected the results of public engagement input and feedback in the selection of Regional Indicators, in the development and selection of a Regional Preferred Development scenario and the final regional Strategic Framework;
- Documented the extent and depth of public engagement in the total planning process; and
- Coordinated with other workgroups on:
  - Information they need from the public engagement process;
  - Information the public engagement process will need from them; and
  - Incorporate appropriate public engagement activities into their work.

## A Public Engagement Plan for Phase I

The plan included:

- A range of interactive opportunities including Open Houses, Small Group Events, the Community Conversation Kit and Virtual Opportunities to introduce the goals, overall plan and context for CONNECT.
- The identification of what information and materials were needed so the participation of the public is based on shared understanding of the current state and the goals for CONNECT.
- The integration of a shared inquiry process for all public engagement opportunities in Phase One (Open Houses, Small Group Events, Community Conversations and Virtual Opportunities) so that the data could be analyzed in a consistent way regardless of which venue a person chose for their participation.
- The collection and analysis using accepted qualitative data analysis standards of *all* phases of public input and the presentation of this data in a highly accessible and useful form to other work groups. The design of the process for the collection of participation responses to meet reporting standards for HUD while maintaining the confidentiality of participants; documentation through photography, video and other materials of the experience of participants for use by the Communications Team and others.
- Creation of a feedback loop so that public engagement can refine the process to continue to meet the needs of the CONNECT process overall as well as the project needs of other work groups.

The activities conducted:

- **33 Open Houses.** They were designed as a drop-in process placed in central locations across the region and supported by a far ranging communications effort led by local elected officials.
- **64 Small Groups.** The 14 county region has a rich and varied civic infrastructure. Being involved and engaged in the community is a widely held value for many who invest their time in different groups. By engaging with pre-existing civic groups -- of a wide range of topic areas -- public engagement occurs in a comfortable and well-known setting. Often, these groups allow access to diverse constituencies since they may be organized along a number of different lines -- age, race, geography, and socio-economic status.
- **Community Conversation Kit.** A self-directed model for groups of people to use on their own to participate in the process.
- **Virtual Opportunities.** Acknowledging that many people are comfortable in the digital world, a matching virtual experience was created. These opportunities were integrated with other avenues of public engagement.

## Purpose of Phase I

The CONNECT Our Future leadership team designed Phase I to engage the public in a vibrant regional planning process and to collect demographically representative data that will inform later phases of CONNECT. Phase I focused on inclusion, diversity and the richness of an ongoing conversation with residents of the 14-county CONNECT region. As it determined the shared priorities and common values of the region, CONNECT had two primary goals for Phase I, explored below

### Introduce and Educate About CONNECT Our Future

Phase I provided residents across the region with an overview of the CONNECT Our Future project and educated them about the importance of a regional planning framework, resident engagement and scenario development. Most residents were unaware of the anticipated population growth in the region, and a key piece of the Phase I process was establishing a wider understanding of our shared growth challenges and opportunities.

Through a full suite of public engagement options, Phase I provided a welcoming gateway for neighbors to enter the CONNECT process, joining a dialogue that later provided them with Phase I results and invited them to participate in Phases Two and Three.

As it introduced residents to the CONNECT project, Phase I increased understanding of regional planning and began candid conversations with people who care deeply about their communities.

### Ground the CONNECT Process in Shared Values and Priorities

Findings from Phase I will inform Phases Two and Three and ground them in residents' most dearly-held values and community attributes. Participants answered questions such as, "What do you treasure in your community" and "What do you want to preserve or see more of?" and their answers were key factors

in the selection of regional indicators for the remaining two stages of the CONNECT process. Phase I responses influenced indicator selection by highlighting which aspects of the region's future are so important to the public that they want those elements to influence or drive public policy.

Resident input also was core to RealityCheck2050 and to the Community Growth Workshops, and it will be key to shaping the alternative growth scenarios of Phase Three. Throughout Phase I, the CONNECT leadership team was focused on providing residents with an authentic opportunity to share opinions that would directly influence the regional planning process and the CONNECT decision-making framework.

In addition to these goals, CONNECT Phase I had a beneficial secondary result: It created a new community data resource that provides a snapshot of the region's priorities and values. Thanks to strategic outreach and extensive efforts to diversify participants in Phase I activities, CONNECT has produced a new resource for leaders in the public, private and nonprofit sectors. Results of Phase I have been widely distributed to elected officials and city/county managers, and both regional and county-level results are available at [CONNECTOurFuture.org](http://CONNECTOurFuture.org).

## Methodology

Phase I's public engagement methods ensured that the CONNECT project was inclusive, diverse, accessible and respectful of every opinion shared through a wide suite of participation opportunities. Through strong collaborations and strategic recruiting efforts, Phase I met and exceeded its goals for resident representation in the CONNECT Our Future process.

### Public Engagement & Inclusivity Work Groups

Phase I public engagement activities were guided and overseen by two CONNECT working groups that merged into one task force shortly before the first open houses and small groups took place in late 2012. The original work groups and their missions were:

#### Regional Public Engagement Work Group

The mission of this work group was to create inclusive, diverse and widespread engagement in the three phases of CONNECT Our Future, and to collaborate with all other CONNECT work groups to ensure that opportunities for public engagement were included in their work. The group focused on designing multiple opportunities, avenues and invitations for residents to participate in the CONNECT project; ensuring that data from that research informed all later stages of the planning process; and leveraging existing networks within the region so that participants, leaders and neighbors could be advocates and active “engagers” for the process, as well (see Appendix A for the Regional Public Engagement Work Group's Team Charter).

#### Inclusivity Team

The mission of this team was to provide the inspiration, information and tools to guide the CONNECT process and its work teams so that many voices are integrated into the work of the CONNECT

Consortium. The Inclusivity Team worked to address challenges to participation, ensure demographic representation for all of the region's residents in the Phase I results, advocate for and design inclusive decision-making processes, and welcoming unique perspectives and underserved populations into the CONNECT Our Future process (see Appendix B for the Inclusivity Team's Team Charter).

The newly merged Public Engagement and Inclusivity Work Group met twice each month throughout Phase I. Members included representatives from CCOG and CRCOG, The Lee Institute, Kimley-Horn, Urban Land Institute, UNC Charlotte, the Centralina Area Agency on Aging, Sustain Charlotte, and 10 additional organizations. The Work Group took responsibility for the full spectrum of public engagement activities and discussed:

- Process design
- Removing barriers to participation
- Engagement event logistics: scheduling, venues, materials
- Outreach and recruiting for engagement events
- Communication strategies
- Data review and distribution of Phase I research results
- Use of data gained from resident input
- Staff and volunteer resource allocation.

### Public Engagement Partners

CONNECT Our Future engaged three primary public engagement partners for Phase I:

- **The Lee Institute:** A Charlotte-based nonprofit providing services to the social sector ranging from leadership development and public engagement to strategic planning and board development. The Lee Institute served as the principle public engagement partner, working with the CONNECT leadership team to design and implement Phase I. Together they designed the process, survey questions and demographic forms; supported the open houses; recruited and facilitated the small groups; and analyzed and

reported results from more than 2,200 resident surveys.

- **The Latin American Chamber of Commerce of Charlotte:** A Charlotte-based nonprofit that offers a sustainable bilingual platform of programs, events and services that engages, empower and supports both Latino and non-Latino businesses, entrepreneurs and professionals. The LACCC focused on recruiting and facilitating Latino small groups during Phase I, including training and deploying bilingual facilitators throughout the region.
- **Sustain Charlotte:** A Charlotte-based nonprofit that advances a regional sustainability movement by educating, advocating, convening and inspiring residents to work together to create a vibrant future for their communities. Sustain Charlotte focused on recruiting and facilitating youth involvement in CONNECT's Phase I initiatives, primarily through small groups of high school and college students.

### Development of Research Questions and Demographic Form

In early 2012, the Public Engagement & Inclusivity Work Group partnered with The Lee Institute and additional CONNECT leadership to draft the two critical public engagement documents for Phase I: The research questions (see Appendix C, *"Small Groups Response Form: What Matters for the Future"*) and the participant demographic form (see Appendix D, *"Demographic Information Form"*).

### Research Questions

Through a collaborative and iterative process, the public engagement partners designed, revised and finalized the research questions to be used across all participation avenues during Phase I. The goal of these questions was to surface key community values and priorities, engaging residents in a conversation about their most treasured regional assets and attributes.

Working together to develop the thirteen questions used throughout Phase I, the public engagement partners adhered to several best practice principles for community engagement and research:

- Demonstrating a preference for open-ended questions, enabling participants to share and reflect the breadth and richness of their opinions;
- Drafting questions that are non-leading and neutral;
- Using clear, jargon-free language that shows no cultural or community bias;
- Ensuring that participants through all input avenues (open houses, small groups, online surveys) consistently answer the same questions in the same order;
- Moving participants strategically from more personal questions (e.g., what place do you treasure in your community?) to more communal questions (e.g., what do you see as the biggest challenge for the future of the region?);
- Focusing on questions that could best inform and shape Phases Two and Three of the CONNECT project, including the selection of regional indicators.

### Demographic Information Form

Concurrent with the design of research questions for the questionnaire, the Public Engagement team drafted the Demographic Information Form to help CONNECT ensure that resident participation reflected the population of the fourteen-county region.

Questions focused on the following areas:

- County of residence
- County of work or study
- Employment status
- Employment type
- Gender
- Marital status
- Age
- Education level
- Household income level
- Employment type
- Race/ethnicity

- Home ownership
- Language preference

Participants completed the Demographic Information Form at the same time they completed the research questions, but the two forms were immediately separated, beginning in separate baskets at the event site and remaining in separate batches throughout the analysis process. The anonymity of every participant was fully protected by this division of research responses and demographic information. The only demographic information directly associated with the questionnaires was a request for each person's home ZIP code, which enabled CONNECT to report research results by county. Otherwise, demographic information was separated from research results and used purely to ensure fair representation of all community groups.

### Suite of Engagement Opportunities

Two core principles of the CONNECT public engagement process were:

- Providing a wide range of opportunities for residents to participate and make their voices heard;
- Removing as many barriers to participation as possible for a diverse group of residents.

To that end, CONNECT chose to engage residents and invite them to answer and discuss the research questions through three primary methods: open houses, small groups and online surveys. Providing multiple avenues to engage in CONNECT was essential to maximizing resident participation, to diversifying both respondents and their perspectives, and to reinforcing the fundamental CONNECT belief that the work of regional planning should be transparent and inclusive.

With more than 100 opportunities for residents to share their values and opinions between October 2012 and March 2013, Phase I exceeded its goal of 2,000 participants by reaching 2,215 residents throughout the fourteen counties.

### Open Houses

CONNECT welcomed 799 participants to 33 open houses across the region, each running from 4:00PM to 7:00PM in a community venue such as a fire station, a city hall, a community college or a Lions Club. All Open Houses were ADA accessible, and advertised with the offer to provide language assistance to LEP persons.

Participants entered the open houses and began by placing dots on a regional map to mark where they live, work and play. They progressed through a sequence of posters explaining the anticipated population growth in the CONNECT region and introducing them to the regional planning process. Participants were invited to complete the research questions on either paper copies of the survey or on multiple available laptops, and to complete the demographic information form on paper.

### Small Groups

Complementing the open houses, which were open to the public and attracted residents who may or may not know each other, were the Phase I small groups, which focused on established, intact groups of friends, neighbors or colleagues.

These groups ranged from the Concord Engineering Office Staff to the Mooresville Soup Kitchen volunteers and guests, from the Cleveland County Arts Council to Friendship Baptist Church members, and from the Catawba Indian Nation to the Career Leadership Academy for Youth at Goodwill Industries.

Participants included 826 residents attending 64 general small groups; 233 young people attending 8 youth small groups (organized by Sustain Charlotte); and 97 residents attending 10 Spanish Language small groups (organized by the Latin American Chamber).

At each group, a professionally trained facilitator led participants through the research questions, inviting them to share their answers with each other, discuss in smaller subgroups, and highlight commonalities and differences in their responses.

### Online Surveys

In addition to open houses and small groups, Phase I offered residents the opportunity to complete the research questions online through a publicly available Survey Monkey link. Over the course of the five-month public engagement process, 260 people completed the survey online.

### Removing Barriers

Throughout the design of these events, CONNECT leadership was committed to removing barriers to participation for all residents. Venues were centrally located in their communities, ADA accessible, adjacent to free parking and often public transportation lines, and scheduled for times when the maximum number of residents could attend. The three primary engagement methods were tailored to reach people at varying ages, locations, education and income levels, technological savvy, comfort levels with civic participation, and trust in government.

For a detailed listing of all participation opportunities, with dates and locations for all events, please see Appendix E.

### Outreach Strategy

From its inception, CONNECT Our Future committed to be a process that would engage underrepresented groups and expand the regional planning conversation beyond the ‘usual suspects’ and into groups that care passionately about their communities but rarely have their voices heard. The recruiting and outreach strategy, whether for open houses or small groups, began with extensive research into each county’s leaders, demographics, prominent organizations, distinctive dynamics and current challenges.

For **open houses**, CONNECT worked with local media to publicize each event, and elected officials (many of whom serve on the CCOG and CRCOG boards and committees) were encouraged to promote the open houses through their networks, newsletters and social media. Public officials gave radio and television interviews, as well as speaking at social and civic

groups to promote the open houses. Press coverage included articles in the Charlotte Business Journal and a panel appearance on Charlotte Talks (NPR affiliate). Some local leaders included the open houses on their ‘calling posts,’ or resident robo calls, and others recruited peers and colleagues to assist with an informal volunteer recruiting network.

For **small groups**, the public engagement team focused on recruiting intact groups with regularly scheduled meetings that could be adapted or converted to CONNECT small group discussions. This emphasis on intact groups created more open dialogue and discussion among participants, who already were comfortable with each other and their setting, and it allowed the CONNECT process to reach communities and groups that were unlikely to attend open houses or complete the research questions online.

The Lee Institute reached out to these leaders and prominent groups, its regional network of government, corporate and nonprofit leaders, and its American Leadership Forum alumni to identify and recruit small groups for CONNECT. The entire CONNECT leadership team funneled potential groups and key contacts to the Lee team, generating hundreds of leads and conversations about sending facilitators into the community on CONNECT’s behalf.

In parallel with this recruiting, Sustain Charlotte and the Latin American Chamber were aggressively recruiting and hosting small groups among youth and Latino residents, respectively. This became increasingly important midway through Phase I, when demographic forms indicated that young people, residents without college degrees, and Latino neighbors were significantly underrepresented against regional demographics. The public engagement team strategically shifted its recruiting efforts to emphasize these groups and was able to increase their participation in the final two months of Phase I.

For demographic analysis of participants, see "Results, Demographic Distribution" or "Appendix G: Demographic Report."

## Total Participation

As discussed in greater detail in the Results section of this report (Section IV), a total of 2,215 residents participated in Phase I, providing more than 28,000 answers to the research questions and representing a wide cross-section of the region's residents.

The small discussion groups, in particular, highlighted the diversity of experience and the richness of the conversation that CONNECT launched across the region. They included both volunteers and diners at a soup kitchen, economic development officials at a local chamber meeting, a multi-generational group of African-American families, high school seniors, small-town city and county officials, and faculty and staff at a local community college.

Examples of these groups' deeply personal responses to open-ended questions included:

- "We have a great region and we need to consistently and constantly be vigilant to preserve the great things about it, while we plan for future growth."
- "Education is one of the very few issues that touch ALL citizens and neighborhoods, and if we don't use it as an opportunity to unify and engage, the social fabric will continue to tear."
- "In 30 years here, I have never ceased to be amazed at what determined people can achieve for the good of the community."
- "With the tremendous assets in culture, arts, natural resources, excellent health care, and quality education, there is no reason for lack of success. All of the qualities for a sustainable community exist."
- "It could be a better community with visionary leaders rather than those content with the status quo."
- "The downtown area should represent all races and cultures if we are to become a vibrant community."
- "Community planning is important, allowing a small town feel that anticipates transportation, poverty, wealth, health, governance and leadership --- that's important to residents."

## Analysis of Responses

Throughout the spring of 2013, The Lee Institute analyzed responses from all 2,215 participants, reading, processing and theming every answer to every research question. As an unbiased partner focused on public engagement, not regional planning, The Lee Institute brought objectivity and neutrality to the analysis of the responses, taking the integrity of each participant's response exceptionally seriously.

The analysis of research question responses fell into two categories: quantitative and qualitative. Demographic information, multiple choice questions and priority-ranking questions were counted, aggregated and reported out for both the entire region and by individual county. An example of this kind of quantitative analysis would be Question 8: "From this list of 31 elements, which five features do you feel are most important for the future of your community or our region?"

For qualitative questions, such as Question 1 ("What is a place that illustrates the best of your community or our region?"), The Lee Institute applied traditional qualitative analysis techniques, classifying and theming every response to every question in extensive code books. Each member of the analysis team was assigned specific research questions (example: one person might have questions 1, 2 and 3 throughout the entire project), enabling one person to theme all 2,215 responses to a single question and to master those coding categories across all Phase I activities.

Coding categories were developed and reviewed in an ongoing and transparent loop. Initial codes were created in late 2012, as the first wave of research question responses arrived, and they were continuously revised and retested against new incoming answers. The Lee Institute applied a team approach to the theming process, working collaboratively with each other in team "think tanks" and in cross-staff review teams to ensure that the best thinking and analysis was brought to bear as every question was themed.

By the end of the analysis process, the CONNECT code books for wider-ranging questions like #11 ("Please

identify a few things you think pose the biggest challenge for you, your community or the future of our region”) included more than 30 unique codes.

## Results

### Total Participation

Phase I of the CONNECT Our Future initiative concluded with a total of 2,215 participants in the 14 county program area, which includes Anson, Cabarrus, Chester, Cleveland, Gaston, Iredell, Lancaster, Lincoln, Mecklenburg, Rowan, Stanly, Union (NC), Union (SC), and York counties. The breakdown of participation is as follows:

- 64 Small Groups totaling 826 participants
- 33 Open Houses totaling 799 participants
- 260 Website participants via online survey
- 8 Youth small groups totaling 233 participants
- 10 Latino small groups totaling 97 participants

(see Appendix F)

### Demographic Distribution

Data gathered from open houses, small groups, and online surveys were analyzed in various demographic segments: Geography, Age, Gender, Education, Income, Race/Ethnicity, and Employment Status.

#### Geography

During Phase I, Mecklenburg County was slightly under-represented, comprising 28.90% of all sample responses, compared to a population that constituted 37.53% of the regional population. Iredell County, meanwhile, was slightly over-represented with 12.54% sample response compared to a 6.51% regional share of population. All other counties included were represented within 1-2% difference +/- the respective recommended regional sample.

#### Age

Of total Phase I participants, 40% were age 55 or older, while 22% of respondents were younger than 25. As is typical with civic engagement initiatives, this is slightly higher than the regional population trends, as more adults and older adults are likely to

participate in civic and community planning events.

#### Gender

Participation by men and women was nearly perfectly reflective of the regional population distribution.

#### Education & Income

Similar to the age distribution, participants in Phase I tended to be slightly more educated and affluent than regional population averages. Respondents who had achieved at least a 2 or 4 year college degree represented 60% of overall participants (higher than the regional average), and 21% had a high school diploma/GED or less (lower than the regional average).

Focusing on income, 17% of respondents in Phase I of CONNECT Our Future make less than \$30,000 annually, as compared to the regional average of 28%. Respondents making more than \$100,000 annually represented 23% of participants, compared to the regional average of 14%.

#### Race/Ethnicity

The race and ethnicity of Phase I participants was within -3%/+2% of regional averages. The Caucasian/White population was represented within one percentage point of its regional average, and the Latino population was slightly overrepresented, with 7.02% of responses, versus 5.64% of the region. African Americans were underrepresented slightly, with just less than 19% of participants and just over 21% of the region's population.

#### Employment

Demographic forms showed that 63.4% of participants were employed, either full-time, part-time, self-employed or through temporary or contract work. The percentage of unemployed participants in Phase I was precisely on par with the regional average, both of which were at 9.6%. Of the total number of respondents, the top three sectors of

employment were:

1. The government sector (15.8%)
2. Professionals (11.9%)
3. The for-profit sector (10.7%)

Detailed charts containing the breakdown of participants from each county, shown by avenue of participation and by demographic group, can be found in Appendix G.

## Findings

### Statistical Significance

A sample of more than 2200 individuals participated in Phase I of the CONNECT Our Future project, meeting the significance test for a region of this size. This means that there were enough participants to provide a representative sample of the community for Phase I. Common civic engagement practice does not attempt to be numerically significant. For example, in order to obtain numerical significance, 10% of our region would need to participate, equaling approximately 200,000 people. This would be a good goal, but not realistic to achieve.

Public engagement projects instead focus on being demographically representative, diverse, statistically significant, and engaging. The *invitation* to be engaged is important in determining statistical significance, whether or not the invitation is accepted. Each phase of CONNECT has a participation goal, which was exceeded for Phase I, but the overall goal is to engage as many participants as possible.

The strategy for all phases of CONNECT engagement is to encourage participation and work to reduce barriers to inclusion. The “go to them” approach focuses on going out into the region, taking the engagement activities to where the people already are, to ensure that their voices are heard in this process. By offering many chances, many times, and many ways for residents to be involved, and by identifying and reducing barriers to participation, this process encourages greater representation of all segments of the community.

### Findings by Question

During Phase I engagement activities, the first six (6) questions asked of the participants were created as an arc, designed to uncover the values of the community in progression by focusing on the positive, eliciting responses around what people appreciate the most, and inviting people to focus on a treasured place, its importance and its deeper meaning.

Question 1 asked, “Is there a place that illustrates the best of your community or our region that you appreciate most?” The top five responses, which account for 78% of responses, were:

1. Downtowns (27%)
2. Parks (16%)
3. Natural Assets (13%)
4. Neighborhood (12%)
5. Community Asset (10%)

The progression of questions from Question 2 through Question 6 delved into descriptions, importance and deeper meaning around the place named in Question 1, and they found multiple responses for natural assets, safety and family, noting clear themes in these areas.

Questions 7 & 8 asked participants to look at a list of 31 categories of features in the region, ranging from town centers and working farms to shade tree neighborhoods and arts and culture venues. The top five responses to Question 7, “What is the one feature type that best represents the place you named in Question 1?” were:

1. Town Center/Main Street (12.9%)
2. Community parks & greenways (12.6%)
3. State parks, forests, preserved land (11.2%)
4. Rivers, streams & lakes (7.7%)
5. Neighborhoods with housing, offices & shops together (6.5%)

Similarly, the top five responses to Question 8, “What are the 5 features you feel are most important for the future of your community and our region?” were:

1. Community parks & greenways (8.7%)
2. School, college & university campus (7.8%)
3. State parks, forests, preserved land (6.7%)
4. Rivers, streams & lakes (6.6%)

#### 5. Arts & community centers (6.1%)

Questions 9 & 10 asked participants to consider transportation needs and asked which features were most important to them. The top five responses for Question 9, where participants were asked “When you think about the future transportation needs of your community, which 3 transportation features are the most important to you?” were:

1. More sidewalks, trails, other safe places to walk (20.8%)
2. Improved roads (14.4%)
3. Better connected streets that provide a choice of routes (13.8%)
4. More bike lanes, paths, other safe places to bike (12.2%)
5. New/more rail transit (10.7%)

The top five responses for Question 10, where participants were asked “What is the **one** transportation feature that is most important to you?” included:

1. Improved roads (22.6%)
2. More sidewalks, trails, other safe places to walk (20.6%)
3. Better connected streets that provide a choice of routes (11.3%)
4. New/more rail transit (11.0%)
5. New/more bus or van transit (10.9%)

Question 11 asked participants, “Please identify what you think the biggest challenge for the future of our region is and why.” Top themes for this item included:

1. Jobs: economic development; poverty; unemployment (19%)
2. Transportation: traffic; walkability (14%)
3. Infrastructure to support growth (10%)
4. Managing growth; sustainable development (9%)
5. Schools; education; skills development (7%)
6. Environment quality - air, water, land (5%)

(Representative quotes from Question 11 can be found in the appendix)

Question 12 asked participants to “Fast forward 10 years. What would be the headline in your local newspaper if we had successfully met the challenges you mentioned in Question 11?” Representative

responses to this item included:

- “New businesses make Cleveland County their home.”
- “100% of Catawba River Basin meets basic quality standards for first time since 1972.”
- “Statesville making it rain.”
- “Region Is best In nation because folks worked together and didn’t care who got the credit.”
- “Rapid growth in our region over the past 10 years is highlighted by smart growth.”
- “Anson County schools has 100% graduation rate with 100% of its children completing high school career or college ready.”

(Headlines from Question 12 fall in line with top themes in Question 11)

Finally, Question 13 asked participants, “Is there anything else that is important to you about your community or our region that you want us to know?” Many of the responses to this item reflected participants’ positive regard and pride for their local community and our region’s assets. This was the most frequent theme, with 16% of responses citing pride and affection for their community. Sample comments included:

- “We have a great region and we need to consistently and constantly be vigilant to preserve the great things about it, while we plan for future growth.”
- “In 30 years here, I have never ceased to be amazed at what determined people can achieve for the good of the community.”

In addition, 13% of respondents used the opportunity to expand on an opinion or provide social commentary. Sample responses include:

- “It could be a better community with visionary leaders rather than those content with the status quo.”
- “The police department is about 20 years behind, I would like to see them brought up to speed and do their jobs or lose their jobs.”
- “Close the check cashing facilities and prohibit any new ones opening.”

Many of the Question 13 responses also reinforced a

top theme from Question 11:

- Transportation; traffic; walkability - "I hope that public transit expands in the region so we can give up our cars and still live our lives."
- Infrastructure to support growth, including roads - "Please Incorporate sidewalks, so incredibly important to society."
- Jobs; economic development; poverty; unemployment - "The college and the college life is important to me now, but the job opportunities and internships are the most important to me."
- Managing growth; sustainable development - "Great people here with many talents, need to find proper balance to preserve history and create new green space vs. growth."

### Differences by County

In addition to overall regional results analysis, CONNECT Our Future analyzed responses by county to determine trends, commonalities and differences among counties and between each county and the regional averages and themes.

Comparisons of individual counties are based on County Reports (Appendix I) and the overall Regional Report (Appendix H).

#### *Anson County, NC*

Respondents from Anson County placed greater importance on education, recreation and heritage than the greater region did.

Results from Anson County exhibited a stronger commitment to open space/green space and farms in their answers. Working farms were listed Question 1 as one of the top five (5) places that represent Anson County and the region, but also are in the top five (5) of places that will be important to Anson County and the region in the future in response to Questions 7 & 8.

Regarding transportation, Questions 9 & 10, Anson County respondents gave greater emphasis to future pedestrian travel and to improving existing roads than the overall region did.

Of the 14 counties, Anson was the only county to list

"violence, drugs, crime & lack of safety, especially for youth & elders" in its top five (5) list of future challenges faced by the county or the region.

Additionally, Anson was the only county to emphasize the importance of "preservation of unique character of towns & neighborhoods" in their community.

#### *Cabarrus County, NC*

Cabarrus County was one of only two counties in the 14 county region have "shopping" listed in the top five (5) places that represent the best of the community or region in response to Question 1. This was a recurrent theme throughout the Cabarrus County results, with "shopping" listed again in Questions 3 and 4 as something that is important to them.

"Attracting business and industry (to rural areas)" was another frequently cited theme for Cabarrus County. Not only did it seen as a challenge facing the community for the future in Question 11, but it was mentioned again in what is generally important to Cabarrus County respondents for Question 13.

Cabarrus County's transportation concerns included a greater importance of pedestrian travel and improving roads for the future in response to Question 9. Public transportation was less important to Cabarrus County respondents than the general region, with 0% importance given to "new/more bus or van transit."

#### *Chester County, SC*

Chester County respondents ranked the historic value and civic pride in their community more highly than the overall region did for Questions 1 through 6. Along with these attributes, respondents viewed economic growth as an underlying theme of the value they placed on Chester's historic value and civic pride.

While Chester County participants thought that houses on acreage and town centers were important for their community now, respondents felt that specialty areas like medical centers and industrial areas would be important to their community in the future. The emphasis on these medical and industrial

places was unique among the 14 counties for Questions 7 & 8.

Chester County was also unique in the strength of their support for improved roads as vitally important to the region, making up over 50% of the responses for Question 9.

Like Cabarrus County, "attracting business and industry (to rural areas)" was a recurrent theme heard in Question 11 among Chester County respondents regarding future challenges. Along with attracting business, having "quality, affordable, inclusionary housing, including for seniors" was a top priority for Chester County, while it was rarely heard from the rest of the region.

Respondents of Chester County also felt that it was important to note in Question 13 that "confidence in elected officials & government leaders (to do the right thing)" be addressed, more so than in other counties or the regional response trends.

### *Cleveland County, NC*

Unique among the region, Cleveland County residents identified "excessive government regulation; government interference" in Question 11 as a top challenge for the future and an important issue to be addressed. This was also paired with a concern of 'lack of funds,' another theme not common among other counties.

Cleveland County also strongly emphasized the importance of farms and farming for the future of the region. Farms were listed in the top five answers to Question 8, along with farmers' markets, accounting for 1/3 of the top themes listed for that question.

### *Gaston County, NC*

Residents of Gaston County provided responses that were highly consistent with those of the rest of the fourteen-county region. A few exceptions included:

- In Question 1, highlighting cultural assets (museums, concert venues, the arts, etc.) as a best feature of their community, and
- In Question 11, a concern about the lack of funds

for the future of the region.

Gaston County results reflected a community that places great importance on issues related to recreation. Recreation was one of the top two things that were especially important to respondents when asked in Questions 3 and 4, and this theme carried through to transportation concerns. Pedestrian modes of transportation (walking & biking) made up over 30% of the total responses for Question 10 when respondents were asked what transportation feature is the most important to you.

### *Iredell County, NC*

Results from Iredell County reflected the importance of education to residents. Education was a recurring response throughout the Iredell County results. The theme of education appeared predominantly in three places: as something that is important to the community for Questions 3 and 4, in terms of a physical feature (school, college and university campus) that is important to the future of the region in Question 8, and in Question 13, when participants were given the opportunity to share their thoughts on any topic of importance to the region.

### *Lancaster County, SC*

Lancaster County's results were largely comparable to regional responses, with two distinguishing trends:

- First, respondents highlighted their "small town feel," history and people as assets, whereas the rest of the region did not express this sentiment as strongly.
- Secondly, Lancaster County respondents focused on the importance of "collaboration and cooperation across the region so that all of the region benefits." This theme appeared both when asked about challenges for the future (Question 11) and what other issues in the community or region they wanted to expand upon (Question 13).

Like several other counties, Lancaster County results showed a preference for pedestrian transportation

(walking & biking) over public transportation. While pedestrian transportation priorities made up almost 50% of the responses for Questions 9 & 10, public transportation accounted for less than 10%, with 0% responses for "new/more bus or van transit."

### *Lincoln County, NC*

Lincoln County respondents offered a slightly different perspective on their current and desired future state than the regional averages. Feedback from residents noted in Question 7 that "Open space/green space," "Working farms," and "Other (churches, etc.)" were the best representations of their community, while focusing on "Neighborhoods with housing, offices and shops together" and "Town center/Main Street" for future growth in Question 8.

Regarding transportation, Lincoln County respondents to Questions 9 & 10 felt that the most important feature to focus on should be "More sidewalks, trails, other safe places to walk." Lincoln County residents placed greater importance on this feature than the region did, with a 5% higher response rate in the county than in the region. This aligned closely with county residents' commitment to the community's environment and green spaces.

When asked about challenges in Question 11, Lincoln County respondents noted "Lack of funds" as one of the top five challenges the community faces, an item not listed in the overall Region results. This trend was also heard in some notable comments relative to the unemployment rate and need for economic growth.

### *Mecklenburg County, NC*

In Mecklenburg County, responses were generally consistent with regional trends, though there were some changes in prioritization of the themed items. Mecklenburg participants placed slightly more emphasis than the region did on "School, college and university campus" as a feature that best represented the community for Question 7, and they ranked "Town center/Main Street" over "Arts and community centers" as one of the top five features considered most important for the future of the community for

Question 8.

In Question 9, Mecklenburg also trended more than the region did toward "Transportation; traffic, walkability" and "Infrastructure to support growth, including roads" as areas of focus as the community plans for significant growth.

### *Rowan County, NC*

Much like its neighbor Cabarrus County, Rowan County respondents listed "Shopping" as one of the top five places that best illustrates the community in Question 1. And unlike regional averages, the county ranked "Other (ie historic district, family owned businesses, restaurants)" high on the list of features representing the area, and placed "Neighborhoods with housing, offices and shops together" as a point of focus in the future.

Respondents were clear in their view of the biggest challenge for the community, with "Jobs; economic development; poverty; unemployment" rating more than 5 percentage points higher in Rowan than the overall Region average for Question 11.

Continuing to strengthen Rowan's apparent desire to "thrive industrially and culturally while maintaining the small town feel" is their dual focus on "Transportation; traffic; walkability" and "Preservation of unique character of towns & neighborhoods". With individuals continuing to move into the county, respondents feel that "transportation and the need for transit will be key with coordinated plan for growth..." and "as the community grows, work needs to be done to keep the 'small town' feel no matter how large it becomes."

### *Stanly County, NC*

Stanly County results largely mirrored overall Region results, except for a notable focus on the desire to draw more industries into the area while still being able to "control high density development". Of the features that respondents felt were most important for the future of the community, "Medical centers" and "Arts and community centers" were ranked in the top

five, which did not appear in the overall Region results for Question 8.

When asked for additional comments in Question 13, 2 out of the 5 top responses were different from the overall Region's, including "Attracting business and industry (to rural areas)," and "Preservation of unique character of towns & neighborhoods."

### Union County, NC

Results from Union County respondents reflected a strong sense of community with an aspiration for strategic growth. "Community asset (library, community center, school, etc.)" was the top ranked place that illustrated the best of the community for Question 1, along with "Other (i.e. church, local businesses, restaurants)" and "School, college and university campus" finding their way onto the top features.

Regarding transportation, Union County had a uniquely higher rate of focus on the need to improve roads, with 6% more respondents citing its importance than in the Region's results for Questions 9 & 10. Similarly, there was a 4% higher county rate of support for "More sidewalks, trails, other safe places to walk" than in Regional results.

Of the six Union County themes for Question 13 around what they felt was important about the community outside of what had already been discussed, four differed from overall Region results: "Confidence in elected officials & government leaders" and "Quality, affordable, inclusionary housing, including for seniors." As one respondent stated, "Our community holds lots of potential, we are ready and eager to see positive growth and change."

### Union County, SC

Union County, SC, placed greater emphasis on the natural environment than the overall Regional results. Of the top 3 features that best illustrate their community for Question 1, "Natural asset (river, lake, mountain, etc.)" topped the list by a wide margin, with 22.2% of the responses. "Shade tree neighborhoods"

also made the top 5 list of features that best represented the community, reflecting a strong tie to the environment as an important part of their lives.

This theme continued as respondents looked ahead, including a unique desire to focus on "Farmers' markets" in Question 8. This was reinforced again in Question 11 by answers around the "lack of open space" as a potential future challenge in the county.

### York County, SC

Like Union County, SC, York County respondents also rated "Natural asset (river, lake, mountain, etc.)" as the place that illustrates the best of the community for Question 1, with "Community parks and greenways" listed as the top rated feature that best represents it for Question 7.

Responses for York County about future challenges largely reflected the overall Region results for Question 11, with the exception of listing "Lack of funds" in the top 5 themes.

### Youth Voice

While the results of CONNECT Phase I were analyzed both as an entire region and as individual counties, responses were also analyzed for the Youth small group discussions organized by Sustain Charlotte. The Youth responses and themes were generally similar to those from the overall Region, although there are a few notable differences in their perceptions of the current and future states of their communities.

More than regional averages, Youth responses trended toward socialization and environmental consciousness. Youth ranked "Community assets (library, community center, school, etc.)" as the best illustrations of the community, while in Question 11, they emphasized "Transportation...", "Environmental quality...", "Managing growth...", "Jobs...", and "More recreational opportunities" as future challenges. Youth groups also were more likely to list "Schools; education; skills development" and "Engaging, supporting youth/younger generation" as important factors to consider in the region's growth.

The youth report can be seen in Appendix J.

### Super Themes

In reviewing 2,215 survey responses, each with 13 responses, various themes emerged across questions and across methods of participation. Whether in open houses, small groups or online surveys, several values emerged as common to most respondents, regardless of their geographic place in the region.

These “super themes” offer additional insights to what people care about in their communities and the region. Themes for a single question increase in significance simply because of frequency: The more times a particular theme is mentioned the higher up the list it moves. Super themes demonstrate a wider scope and are recognized because they appear both frequently *and* in multiple questions.

**People care deeply about natural assets.** These include local, community and state parks; greenways; state forests; preserved land and open spaces; and rivers, streams, lakes and mountains.

Natural Assets was mentioned as a top five response in each of the first seven questions, which probed residents' deeply held values and treasured places. Residents selected natural assets as their most important place (Question 1) and described in detail the importance of these special places. In addition, when asked to provide a category for their special place, people categorized their selection as a natural asset in three of the top five descriptions.

**Residents value safety.** "Safe" and "safety" were ranked as being important and holding a deeper meaning for respondents in the top five responses in four of the first seven questions.

**Family and family-friendly environments are essential.** Family was mentioned as being important to people and reflective of the deeper meaning of the place they selected in the top responses in three questions.

**As they consider the future, residents make a connection among home, family and safety.** Analysis shows a connection between these three core

values. Just one example: In the questions that asked people to look for the deeper meaning of the place they most value in the region (Question 5 and Question 6), 'Safe,' 'Family' and 'Home' shared the top three spots, with only slight changes in order of significance among the answers.

## Public Engagement Team Charter

### Mission

The mission of the Public Engagement Work Group is to provide and implement tools for outreach and engagement of the public, focusing on the use of existing networks and partnerships, to create inclusive, diverse, and widespread engagement in the defined phases of public engagement. The work of the Public Engagement Work Group will coordinate with the work of the Executive Director, the Communications Work Group, the Inclusivity Work Group, and the Open House Work Group to ensure that messaging is consistent and that people throughout the region are aware of the multiple avenues of engagement at all phases of the CONNECT Our Future process. The Public Engagement Work Group will serve the Blueprinting Work Group as its primary client, but work with other program Work Groups (Energy, Housing, Economic Development, etc.) to ensure that opportunities for public engagement are included in their work as appropriate, and will be available to them as a resource.

### Guiding Principles

The Public Engagement Work Group is committed to the following guiding principles:

- To the maximum extent possible, the broad diversity of the region will be engaged in questions of what matters and what is important for the region’s future;
- Multiple venues and opportunities for engagement using a variety of tools will be provided, so that no one is denied the opportunity of participation;
- Messaging to support engagement will be consistent and use data that is consistent with that being used in other CONNECT Our Future messaging;
- Where possible, existing partnerships and networks will be activated, as well as social media and traditional outreach methods, to raise CONNECT Our Future awareness and to engage additional groups and individuals in CONNECT opportunities;
- Where possible, public engagement tools will offer the opportunity for every resident to themselves become an “engager” of their neighbors, friends, co-workers, etc., increasing buy-in to the process; and
- All comments, concerns, questions, and responses will be documented and included in the process. While not every individual issue may be addressed, all will be included.

The work of the Regional Public Engagement Work Group will be based on national best practices and guided by an experienced, multi-disciplinary Work Group, to assure that the CONNECT Consortium’s public engagement supports the Blueprinting process in achieving its goals with thoughtful, diverse, inclusive, and compellingly broad-based community input. It is the goal of the Work Group to actively engage at least 6,500 persons throughout the region in the creation of a Regional Growth Framework through one or more events and engagement opportunities.

### Responsibilities

The Regional Public Engagement Work Group has primary responsibility for development of engagement opportunities that include, but are not limited to, small or intact groups, specialized “open houses” if needed to engage large groups who would not attend an regular open house, development of non-open-house-based tools such as “meetings in a box” or on-line surveys, and coordination (with the Blueprinting Work Group) of Regional and Sub-Regional Reality Check events with ULI. The Public Engagement Work Group also:

- Oversees the development and implementation of outreach and public engagement plans in its areas of

responsibility;

- Coordinates with other Work Groups as noted above to support open houses;
- Identifies and provides input on materials for public engagement use;
- Identifies and develops scopes of services for subcontracts for additional public engagement services, within the bounds of the CONNECT budget;
- Identifies and promotes additional outreach or engagement needs and opportunities, including but not limited to the role of existing Consortium partners and Work Group member organizations in reaching out to their networks;
- Equips outreach partners for their work with appropriate materials and orientation;
- Coordinates with the Blueprinting Work Group on materials being developed for Blueprinting public engagement needs, ensuring that the proposed methods/tools provide the amounts and levels of input needed to fulfill specific Blueprinting Work Group needs;
- Oversees the work of consultants/subcontractors specifically regarding results being achieved and ensuring that the results are reported in useful and clearly-understandable ways;
- Provides advice and technical assistance to other program Work Groups concerning public engagement needs and opportunities;
- Maintains communication with Consortium partners, work groups, local governments, and others to maximize public participation and engagement in CONNECT Our Future; and
- Ensures appropriate documentation of all activities, including participation and outcomes.

The Regional Public Engagement Work Group will work with the Consortium, the Blueprinting Work Group, the Inclusivity Work Group, the Consortium Relations Work Group, and the Communications Work Group in carrying out its work. The Work Group will prepare a work plan and design a process to fulfill its responsibilities described above. The Work Group will update the work plan and process design as needed.

### Anticipated Time Requirements

One-and-one-half hours every other week on average for 2 years, not including any individual research or work assignments associated with the Work Group.

### Members & Coordinator (Name, position, organization)

Work Group Co-Chairs: Stephen Stansbery, Kimley-Horn and ULI Reality Check Co-Chair  
David Walters, UNCC School of Architecture

Coordinator: Rebecca Yarbrough, Senior Advisor, CONNECT, CCOG

The Work Group Co-Chairs work with the Work Group Coordinator to schedule meetings and establish agendas, and to ensure that the work of the Work Group integrates well with the work of other Work Groups. The Work Group Co-Chairs also lead the meetings, report to the Consortium on behalf of the Work Group, and work with other Work Group members and the Work Group Coordinator to identify and recruit Work Group members.

The Work Group Coordinator serves as staff liaison to the Work Group, tracks (or delegates) the Work Group's progress on its work plan and timeline; coordinates needed resources, requests time on the Coordinating Work Group agenda as needed, and coordinates preparation of reports to the Coordinating Work Group and the Consortium. The Work Group Coordinator is the CCOG/CRCOG staff member accountable for Work Group performance.

<u>Members:</u>	Theresa Salmen, Executive Director, ULI Charlotte District Council
	Pat Martin, The Lee Institute
	Libby Cable, The Lee Institute
	Jeanne Kutrow, The Lee Institute
	Scott Migonet, Kimley-Horn and ULI Reality Check Co-Chair
	Shannon Binns, Sustain Charlotte
	Michelle Nance, CCOG Planning Department
	John Highfill, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Council on Aging
	Rebecca Yarbrough, CONNECT Program Senior Advisor
	Wendy Bell, Catawba Regional COG
	Elizabeth Harris, Catawba Indian Nation

### Membership Eligibility

Initial Work Group membership is outlined above. Work Group members may be added in the future, through invitation by the Work Group Co-Chairs, when additional expertise and/or representation is deemed necessary to enhance the work of the Blueprinting Work Group. In addition, consultants may be hired to complete portions of this work.

### Reporting Relationship

Reports to the Project Manager.

### Working Agreements

Members agree to:

- Ensures appropriate documentation of all activities, including participation and outcomes.
- Consistently participate in meetings in person or by phone
- Personally participate, rather than send substitutes
- Take initiative to stay current if they miss a meeting by conferring with colleagues who were present and reviewing meeting materials
- Communicate openly—bring the “parking lot conversation” into the room
- Use SharePoint for all Work Group work and clearly identify Work Group communications via e-mail with the CONNECT PE: start to each subject line.
- Focus on interests—not positions; use conflict to learn more about the problem and how others see it, rather than simply to persuade
- Share air time & begin/end on time
- Acknowledge successes—even the small ones
- Engage in possibilities—think creatively and build on each other’s ideas
- Work diligently to achieve consensus for all decisions, i.e., “I have been heard, and I endorse or can live with the decision.” Fallback plan: majority vote of those organizations represented at the meeting.
- Externally support decisions made by the group. External inquiries about the CONNECT project should be

referred to the Project Manager. The Project Manager will consult with the Public Engagement Work Group Co-Chairs when needed.

## Inclusivity Team Charter

### Mission

Essential to the success of the CONNECT program is the engagement and involvement of a broad base of people who represent many perspectives in community decision-making. The mission of the Inclusivity Team is to provide the inspiration, information and tools to guide the overall effort generally and CONNECT's project teams specifically so that many voices are integrated into the work of the CONNECT Consortium.

### Guiding Principles

This effort relies both on the science of demographics to identify the many sectors of people that need to be involved across all aspects of the Consortium and the input and assistance of the people whose participation is sought. Consequently, challenges and barriers to participation will be jointly identified with the assistance of people across the region. As targeted outreach plans are implemented:

- Care will be taken to avoid any assumption that groups of people lack interest, commitment or capacity to be effectively and fully involved.
- The focus will be on action and results – not just successful outreach.
- The Team will be intentional about reaching out to individuals and groups that are not typically engaged in community decision-making processes.
- People will be recognized as individuals with unique experiences and perspectives, not just members of a particular demographic in terms of income, gender, age, race, education, political ideology or where they live.

The work of the Inclusivity Team will be an evolving process, constantly evaluated and adapted to help assure that the CONNECT Consortium achieves its desired results.

### Responsibilities

The Inclusivity Team is a resource and will assist CONNECT Consortium work groups, and the Consortium itself in working inclusively as they:

- Recognize and address challenges and barriers to participation and/or disparities that may be relevant in their work;
- Actively work to include in their membership representatives of all parties with a direct or indirect interest in their work and engage diverse groups of people in the planning process including individuals and groups not typically engaged in community decision-making, supporting their meaningful and full participation;
- Include in problem-solving processes the broad diversity of the region's population, including those persons most affected by the issues.
- Consider how decisions and plans for participation can fully support inclusive engagement. For example, locations and timing for participation or engagement are convenient, accessible and varied; many methods and opportunities for engagement; information is shared that meets the literacy levels and major language groups predominant in the region; etc.

The Inclusivity Team will also fully support the administrative and operational needs of the CONNECT Consortium by:

- Ensuring appropriate documentation of participation both in meeting HUD requirements and to ensure that

consensus processes are truly inclusive; and

- Working with the Finance, Compliance and HUD Relations (FCHR) Team to carry out the Project’s work in compliance with all HUD requirements, applicable federal and state laws, and in ways that assure compliance with HUD documentation expectations in regards to participation.

The Inclusivity Team will work with the Public Engagement Team, with the Consortium Relations Team, the Communications Team, and with the Coordinating Team to identify and/or develop resources to enable this level of inclusion.

*The Team will prepare a work plan and design a process to fulfill its responsibilities described above, for review and approval by the Coordinating Team. The Team will update the work plan and process design, for review and approval by the Coordinating Team, as needed.*

### Anticipated Time Requirements

Approximately 7 hours per month on average, with bi-weekly meetings of 90 minutes each and variable independent work between meetings. Time commitments may vary as inclusivity systems are developed and implemented.

### Members & Coordinator (Name, position, organization)

Team Chair: Stefanie Leak, JCSU, and Alice Bennett, H.E.L.P.

Coordinator: Rebecca Yarbrough, Assistant Director, CCOG

*The Team Chair works with the Team Coordinator to schedule meetings and establish agendas, and to ensure that the work of the Team integrates well with the work of other Teams. The Team Chair also leads the meetings, reports to the Consortium on behalf of the Team, and works with other Team members and the Team Coordinator to identify and recruit Team members.*

*The Team Coordinator serves as staff liaison to the Team, tracks (or delegates) the Team’s progress on its work plan and timeline; coordinates needed resources, requests time on the Coordinating Team agenda as needed, and coordinates preparation of reports to the Coordinating Team and the Consortium. The Team Coordinator is the CCOG/CRCOG staff member accountable for Team performance.*

Members:

- Gayla Woody or Designee, Centralina AAA
- Venecia Rock, Centralina Human Resources Coordinator
- John Highfill or Bill McCoy, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Council on Aging
- Victoria Rittenhouse, Centralina EDC
- Wendy Bell, Catawba Regional COG
- Alice Bennett, Lead Organizer, Helping Empower Local People
- Stefanie Leak, Johnson C. Smith University
- Pat Martin, The Lee Institute
- Libby Cable, The Lee Institute
- Mary Gaertner, City of Charlotte Neighborhood and Business Services
- Shannon Binns, Executive Director, Sustain Charlotte
- Jess George, Executive Director, Latin American Coalition

The Catawba Indian Nation

*Others to be named on the recommendation of existing Team members or the Coordinating Team*

### Membership Eligibility

Team membership is open to any Consortium member with an interest and skills in promoting inclusion of all segments of the population in regional problem-solving and in building regional problem-solving capacity through such inclusion; and any consultants specifically hired to contribute to this work.

### Reporting Relationship

Reports to the Coordinating Team.

### Working Agreements

Members agree to:

- Consistently participate in meetings in person or by phone
- Personally participate, rather than send substitutes
- Take initiative to stay current if they miss a meeting by conferring with colleagues who were present and reviewing meeting materials
- Communicate openly—bring the “parking lot conversation” into the room
- Focus on interests—not positions; use conflict to learn more about the problem and how others see it, rather than simply to persuade
- Share air time & begin/end on time
- Acknowledge successes—even the small ones
- Engage in possibilities—think creatively and build on each other’s ideas
- Work diligently to achieve consensus for all decisions, i.e., “I have been heard, and I endorse or can live with the decision.” Fallback plan: majority vote of those organizations present
- Externally support decisions made by the group.

## Small Group Response Form: What Matters for the Future



### Small Groups Response Form: What Matters for the Future

**1. Tell me about a place that illustrates the best of your community, or our region, that is, what you appreciate most. It could be a downtown area, a neighborhood, a workplace, a natural area – anything.**

---

---

---

**2. What are three words or phrases you would use to describe this place to a visitor?**

---

---

---

**3. What are some things about this place that are especially important to you?**

---

---

---

**4. Circle the one that is most important in your list in #3 above.**

\*\*\*\*\*

Places often have deep meaning for people. When you think of the importance of the place you identified, what might be some of those deeper meanings? As an example: the word “house” refers to a physical structure; it might be an apartment or a condo. It’s important to you because it’s where you live, it’s your home. “Home” has a deeper meaning for many people. It can represent security, safety, family or something else.

**5. When you think of the importance of the place you identified, what might be some of those deeper meanings?**

---

---

---

**6. Circle the one that is most important to you in your list in #5 above.**

Our region has many features that serve different purposes. They can be residential, commercial, natural, or any combination that serves a variety of purposes.

**7. Looking at the list of features below, circle the one that best represents the place you named in Question 1. If you don't see a feature that represents the place you named, use the blank space to write in your response.**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Working farms  | <input type="checkbox"/> Office parks                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> State parks, forests, and preserved land               | <input type="checkbox"/> Grocery stores                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rivers, streams and lakes                              | <input type="checkbox"/> Farmers' markets                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Houses on acreage                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Shopping centers                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Country stores   | <input type="checkbox"/> Shopping malls                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community parks and greenways                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Town center/Main street                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shade tree neighborhoods                               | <input type="checkbox"/> High-rise housing                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile home parks                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> High-rise offices                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Houses on large lots                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Metropolitan centers                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Houses on small lots                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial areas                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Apartments and condominiums                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Airport                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Neighborhoods with different kinds of housing together | <input type="checkbox"/> Hospitals and clinics                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Neighborhoods with housing, offices and shops together | <input type="checkbox"/> Schools, college and university campus |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Neighborhoods with all the same type of housing        | <input type="checkbox"/> Sports facilities                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____   | <input type="checkbox"/> Arts and community centers             |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Museum and concert venues              |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____                           |

**8. Now, take another look at the above list of features in our region. Put a check in the box next to the FIVE that you feel are most important for the future of your community and our region.**

\*\*\*\*\*

**9. When you think about the future transportation needs of your community, which features listed below are the most important to you? Put a check in the box next to the THREE that are most important to you.**

- Better-connected streets that provide a choice of routes
- Improved roads (wider, turn lanes, etc.)
- More new roads
- New/more bus or van transit
- New/more rail transit
- More sidewalks, trails, other safe places to walk
- More bike lanes, paths, other safe places to bicycle
- Access to inter-city passenger rail service
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

10. Please circle the ONE that is most important to you in the list above.

\*\*\*\*\*

11. Please identify a few things you think pose the **biggest challenge** for you, your community or the future of our region. Complete the following sentence or add your own ideas in the space provided.

The biggest challenge is \_\_\_\_\_  
because \_\_\_\_\_.

**Additional Comments:**

12. Thinking about the biggest challenge that you identified above, fast forward 10 years or so. What would be the headline in your local newspaper if we had successfully met the challenge you mentioned?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

13. Is there anything else that is important about your community or our region that you want us to know?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Thank you again for your participation in today’s conversation. So that we have an idea who attended today, please list your home zip code: \_\_\_\_\_



Vibrant Communities – Robust Region

For more information please visit us on the web at [www.ConnectOurFuture.org](http://www.ConnectOurFuture.org), on Facebook at Connect-Our-Future, or on Twitter @ConnectOurFutr.

## Demographic Information Form



Vibrant Communities – Robust Region

### Demographic Information Form

CONNECT Our Future hopes to engage many people in the region, representing the full diversity of the population and geography, in the process of creating a Regional Growth Framework that reflects the hopes of all people for the future. To help us ensure that our Public Engagement processes are reaching everyone, we would appreciate your answering the following questions about yourself and your life situation.

This is entirely voluntary and entirely anonymous—PLEASE DO NOT INCLUDE YOUR NAME ON THIS DOCUMENT. If you feel comfortable answering some questions but not others, that's fine—please just give the information you feel comfortable disclosing.

Thank you for your time and assistance to help ensure a fully inclusive process!

#### 1. County You Live In (Please select one)

- |                                    |                                      |                                   |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Anson     | <input type="checkbox"/> Lancaster   | <input type="checkbox"/> Union SC |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cabarrus  | <input type="checkbox"/> Lincoln     | <input type="checkbox"/> York     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chester   | <input type="checkbox"/> Mecklenburg | <input type="checkbox"/> Other:   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cleveland | <input type="checkbox"/> Rowan       | _____                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gaston    | <input type="checkbox"/> Stanly      |                                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Iredell   | <input type="checkbox"/> Union NC    |                                   |

#### 2. If you are employed or are a student, county you work or study in (Please select one)

- |                                    |                                      |                                   |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Anson     | <input type="checkbox"/> Lancaster   | <input type="checkbox"/> Union SC |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cabarrus  | <input type="checkbox"/> Lincoln     | <input type="checkbox"/> York     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chester   | <input type="checkbox"/> Mecklenburg | <input type="checkbox"/> Other:   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cleveland | <input type="checkbox"/> Rowan       | _____                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gaston    | <input type="checkbox"/> Stanly      |                                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Iredell   | <input type="checkbox"/> Union NC    |                                   |

#### 3. Gender (Please select one)

- Female  Male

#### 4. Current Marital Status (Please select one)

- Single  Divorced/Separated
- Married  Widowed
- Domestic Partner

#### 5. Age

In what year were you born? \_\_\_\_\_

6. **Education** (Please select one)
- Less than High School
  - High School/GED
  - Some College
  - Associate Degree
  - Bachelors Degree
  - Masters Degree
  - Professional Degree (MD, DDS, etc.)
  - PhD
7. **Household Income Level (per year)** (Please select one)
- Less than \$10,000
  - Between \$10,000 and \$19,999
  - Between \$20,000 and \$29,999
  - Between \$30,000 and \$39,999
  - Between \$40,000 and \$49,999
  - Between \$50,000 and \$59,999
  - Between \$60,000 and \$69,999
  - Between \$70,000 and \$79,999
  - Between \$80,000 and \$89,999
  - Between \$90,000 and \$99,999
  - Between \$100,000 and \$149,999
  - Over \$150,000 per year
8. **Employment Status** (Please check all that apply)
- Unemployed
  - Employed Part-Time
  - Temporary or Contract Work
  - Employed Full-Time
  - Self-Employed
  - Homemaker or Student
  - Retired
  - Unable to work
  - Other: \_\_\_\_\_
9. **Employment Type** (Please check one that most applies)
- For-Profit
  - Religious/Charitable
  - Professional
  - Education
  - Government
  - Other Non-Profit
  - Employed without pay in family business
  - Research
  - Medical
  - Sales
  - Other: \_\_\_\_\_
10. **Race/Ethnicity** (you may select more than one)
- Asian
  - African American/Black
  - Caucasian/White
  - Hispanic/Latino
  - Native American
  - Pacific Islander
  - Other (Please Specify): \_\_\_\_\_
11. **Homeownership** (Please select one)
- Own Single-Family
  - Own Multi-Family (condo/townhome)
  - Rent Single-Family
  - Rent Multi-Family
  - Live with Friend or Family
  - Other rent-free living situation
12. **English is my first language:**
- Yes
  - No

If English is NOT your first language, what is your first language? \_\_\_\_\_

## List of Venues by Date

Open Houses by Date			
Date	Description	Location	County
9/12/2012	Beta	University Hilton	Mecklenburg
11/8/2012	Monroe	Union County Agricultural Center	Union, NC
11/15/2012	Wadesboro	South Piedmont Community College	Anson
11/27/2012	Salisbury	315 Martin Luther King Junior Avenue South	Rowan
11/29/2012	Waxhaw	Waxhaw Women's Club	Union, NC
12/3/2012	Albemarle	Stanly County Agri Civic Cente	Stanly
12/4/2012	Kannapolis	Rowan Cabarrus Community College	Cabarrus
12/6/2012	Locust	Stanly County Community College	Stanly
1/10/2013	Rock Hill	Rock Hill Operations Center	York
1/15/2013	Moorseville	Charles Mack Citizen Center	Iredell
1/17/2013	Chester	Chester County Government Complex	Chester
1/17/2013	Kings Mountain	H. Lawrence Patrick Senior Complex	Cleveland
1/22/2013	Shelby	City Park Gymnasium	Cleveland
1/24/2013	Lawndale	Lawndale Community Center	Cleveland
1/28/2013	Lincolnton	Lincoln Co. Senior Center/Lincoln Campus Gaston College	Lincoln
1/29/2013	Statesville	Statesville Civic Center	Iredell
1/31/2013	Gastonia	Gastonia Police Dept. Community Room	Gaston
1/31/2013	Clover	Clover Community Center	York
2/4/2013	Lancaster	Lancaster Co. Administration Building	Lancaster
2/5/2013	Belmont	Belmont Abbey College - Haid Ballroom	Gaston
2/5/2013	Fort Mill	Fort Mill Library - Baxter	Lancaster
2/6/2013	CLT - Bojangles	Bojangles Coliseum	Mecklenburg
2/7/2013	Richburg	Richburg Fire Station	Chester
2/7/2013	Huntersville	Huntersville Town Hall	Mecklenburg
2/11/2013	CLT - AME Zion	East Stonewall AME Zion Church	Mecklenburg
2/12/2013	Indian Land	Pleasant Hill UMC	Lancaster
2/12/2013	CLT - Crossway	Crossway Community Church	Mecklenburg
2/18/2013	Matthews	Matthews Town Hall	Mecklenburg
2/19/2013	Mt. Holly	Mt. Holly Municipal Complex	Gaston
2/20/2013	CLT - Center City	Wells Fargo Atrium	Mecklenburg
2/21/2013	CLT - Sharon	Sharon Presbyterian Church	Mecklenburg
2/21/2013	York, SC	York Recreational Center	York
2/28/2013	Union, SC	Union County Advanced Technology Center	Union, SC

<b>Small Groups by Date</b>			
<b>Date</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>County</b>
9/13/2012	ALF Senior Fellows	The Lee Institute	Mecklenburg
10/11/2012	Adult Cabarrus Co. Workforce Development Summit	Great Wolf Lodge Concord	Cabarrus
10/29/2012	Chester County Leadership Forum 1	Wagon Wheel Restaurant	Chester
10/29/2012	Chester County Leadership Forum 2	Wagon Wheel Restaurant	Chester
10/29/2012	Chester County Leadership Forum 3	Wagon Wheel Restaurant	Chester
11/15/2012	Youth Council Iredell Co.		Iredell
11/29/2012	Stanly County Senior Center	Stanly County Senior Center	Stanly
12/5/2012	Urban League	Urban League	Mecklenburg
12/5/2012	Friendship Baptist Church	Friendship Baptist Church	Mecklenburg
12/5/2012	Union Co. Community Shelter	Union Co. Community Shelter	Union, NC
12/6/2012	Rowan Helping Ministries	Rowan Helping Ministries	Rowan
12/8/2012	NW Corridor Stakeholders		Mecklenburg
12/11/2012	Jacob's Ladder	Jacob's Ladder	Mecklenburg
12/12/2012	Catawba Indian Nation	Catawba Indian Nation	York
12/13/2012	Aging Providers	Levine Senior Center	Mecklenburg
12/18/2012	Duke Mansion Drop-In	Duke Mansion	Mecklenburg
12/20/2012	IPA2 Attendees	Government Center	Mecklenburg
1/7/2013	PACCC	Richburg Fire Department	Chester
1/10/2013	CLAY - Goodwill	Goodwill Industries	Mecklenburg
1/15/2013	Anson Agricultural Producers	Anson Co. Cooperative Extension Center	Anson
1/15/2013	Anson Co. New Tech High School	Anson Co. New Tech High School	Anson
1/15/2013	Union Co. CAM	Union Co. CAM	Union, NC
1/16/2013	Indian Land Action Council	The Del Webb Library at Indian Land	York
1/17/2013	Centralina Economic Development Commission	COG	Mecklenburg
1/22/2013	Mt. Pleasant	Lions Club	Cabarrus
1/23/2013	Air Quality Workgroup	Large Conference Room at Centralina COG	Mecklenburg
1/23/2013	Rowan DSS	Rowan DSS	Rowan
1/23/2013	Stanly Co. Chamber & Albemarle Dev't Corp.	Albemarle City Hall Community Room	Stanly
1/24/2013	Rowan Co. Municipal Mtg.	Trinity Oaks - Lutheran Home	Rowan
1/29/2013	Charlotte Chamber	Chamber of Commerce	Mecklenburg
2/1/2013	Studio 345 1	Spirit Square	Mecklenburg
2/1/2013	Studio 345 2	Spirit Square	Mecklenburg
2/1/2013	The Hive	The Hive	York
2/6/2013	ImageMark	ImageMark	Gaston
2/6/2013	Keeping Families Together	Belmont, NC	Gaston
2/6/2013	Bilingual Facilitator Training	The Lee Institute	Mecklenburg

<b>Small Group by Date (cont.)</b>			
<b>Date</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>County</b>
2/7/2013	Lincoln Co. ELBA 2	Unity Presbyterian Church	Lincoln
2/8/2013	Lancaster Seniors 1	Lancaster Senior Center	Lancaster
2/8/2013	Lancaster Seniors 2	Lancaster Senior Center	Lancaster
2/8/2013	GCAA	GCAA Offices	Mecklenburg
2/8/2013	Union Council Chambers	City of Union	Union, SC
2/13/2013	Alliance for Health 1	Cleveland Reigonal Medical Center	Cleveland
2/13/2013	Alliance for Health 2	Cleveland Reigonal Medical Center	Cleveland
2/13/2013	Alliance for Health 3	Cleveland Reigonal Medical Center	Cleveland
2/13/2013	Alliance for Health 4	Cleveland Reigonal Medical Center	Cleveland
2/16/2013	UNCC MPA Students	UNCC	Mecklenburg
2/19/2013	HOLLA	HOLLA	Anson
2/20/2013	Cornerstone Dentistry	Cornerstone Dentistry	Cleveland
2/20/2013	Cleveland Co. Arts Council	Cleveland Co. Arts Council	Cleveland
2/21/2013	Kiwanis Club #1	Rock Hill City Club	York
2/21/2013	Kiwanis Club #2	Rock Hill City Club	York
2/24/2013	Friends of Andrew Jackson State Park	Andrew Jackson State Park - Meeting House	Lancaster
2/25/2013	Concord Engineering Office Staff	Concord Engineering	Cabarrus
2/25/2013	Concord Engineering Field Staff	Concord Engineering	Cabarrus
2/26/13	Charlotte Region Commerical Relators	Midtown Centre	Mecklenburg
2/27/13	Gaston College 12pm	Gaston College	Gaston
2/27/13	Gaston College 1pm	Gaston College	Gaston
2/27/13	Gaston College 2pm	Gaston College	Gaston
2/27/13	Gaston College 3pm	Gaston College	Gaston
2/27/13	ISCEC	Iredell Statesville Community Enrichment Corporation	Iredell
2/27/13	Mitchell Community College	Mitchell Community College	Iredell
2/28/13	Mint Hill Chamber		Mecklenburg
3/1/13	Mooresville Soup Kitchen	Mooresville Soup Kitchen	Iredell

Youth Small Groups by Date			
Date	Description	Location	County
2/7/2013	UNCC	UNCC	Mecklenburg
2/16/2013	Youth Davidson		Mecklenburg
3/7/2013	Holla	HOLLA	Anson
3/13/2013	Youth Leadership Statesville		Iredell
3/14/2013	Salisbury-Rowan Community Action Agency		Rowan
3/20/2013	Stanly County YMCA	Stanly County YMCA	Stanly
3/22/2013	Cabarrus-Kannapolis Early College High School	Cabarrus-Kannapolis Early College High School	Cabarrus
3/27/2013	Boys and Girls Club of York County	Boys and Girls Club of York County	York

Latino Small Groups by Date			
Date	Description	Location	County
2/14/2013	HUHS		Mecklenburg
2/19/2013	HUHS		Mecklenburg
2/25/2013	UNISAL	UNISAL Inc.	Mecklenburg
2/26/2013	Bethesda Clinic	Bethesda Health Center	Mecklenburg
2/27/2013	Redstone Rd.	Redstone Rd., Charlotte, NC	Mecklenburg
2/28/2013	Loyalist St.	Loyalist St., Charlotte, NC	Mecklenburg
2/28/2013	Melange Health Solutions	Melange Health Solutions	Mecklenburg
3/4/2013	Archdale Dr.	Archdale Dr., Charlotte, NC	Mecklenburg
	Unknown Group 1		Mecklenburg
	Unknown Group 2		Mecklenburg

## Number of Participants by County & by Venue

Open Houses & Small Groups Included in Sample										
County	Groups				Responses			Totals		
	Open Houses	Small Groups	Youth Groups	Total Groups	Open Houses	Small Groups	Youth Groups	Total Responses	Sample Percentages	Regional Percentages
Anson	1	3	1	5	15	36	20	71	3.82%	1.10%
Cabarrus	1	4	1	6	36	41	26	103	5.54%	7.25%
Chester	2	4	0	6	17	51	0	68	3.66%	1.37%
Cleveland	3	6	0	9	59	49	0	108	5.81%	4.00%
Gaston	3	6	0	9	86	44	0	130	7.00%	8.41%
Iredell	2	4	1	7	128	63	42	233	12.54%	6.51%
Lancaster	3	3	0	6	50	19	0	69	3.71%	3.13%
Lincoln	1	2	0	3	47	21	0	68	3.66%	3.97%
Mecklenburg	8	19	2	29	129	313	95	537	28.90%	37.53%
Rowan	1	3	1	5	39	51	11	101	5.44%	5.64%
Stanly	2	2	1	5	64	26	17	107	5.76%	2.47%
Union, NC	2	2	0	4	25	33	0	58	3.12%	8.21%
Union, SC	1	1	0	2	9	5	0	14	0.75%	1.18%
York	3	5	1	9	95	74	22	191	10.28%	9.23%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>799</b>	<b>826</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>1858</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

\* Number of responses reflect number of response forms received, may differ from number of demographic forms received

\*\*Regional percentages from Annual Estimates of the Resident Population: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2012, U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division

Website Survey	
As of Date	Number of Responses
4/4/13	260

\* Not all demographic markers available for website surveys

Latino Small Groups	
Number of Groups	Number of Responses
10	97

## Demographic Report

### Location

\* Location information not available for website submissions

County You Live In					
County	Small Groups	Open Houses	Youth Groups	Latino Groups	Total
Anson	40	16	21	0	77
Cabarrus	46	22	36	1	105
Chester	54	13	0	0	67
Cleveland	48	57	0	0	105
Gaston	42	140	1	1	184
Iredell	39	136	42	0	217
Lancaster	50	31	0	1	82
Lincoln	40	53	1	1	95
Mecklenburg	285	144	65	94	588
Rowan	51	53	6	0	110
Stanly	33	36	16	0	85
Union, NC	47	36	1	2	86
Union, SC	7	12	2	0	21
York	45	78	21	1	145
Other	24	10	11	0	45

County You Work In					
County	Small Groups	Open Houses	Youth Groups	Latino Groups	Total
Anson	41	14	16	0	71
Cabarrus	45	35	34	1	115
Chester	30	9	0	0	39
Cleveland	47	43	0	1	91
Gaston	44	84	1	2	131
Iredell	32	114	44	1	191
Lancaster	12	19	0	0	31
Lincoln	19	72	1	0	92
Mecklenburg	268	145	85	78	576
Rowan	39	33	5	0	77
Stanly	27	31	16	0	74
Union, NC	35	36	1	1	73
Union, SC	5	10	0	1	16
York	48	51	21	1	121
Other	11	24	24	2	61

Gender, Age, Race and Language

Age Range								
Age Range	Small Groups	Open Houses	Youth Groups	Latino Groups	Website	Total	Sample Percentage	Regional Average
Under 18	51	2	114	24	50	241	12.50%	27.21%
18-24	66	11	84	14	19	194	10.07%	5.83%
25-34	76	41	10	22	6	155	8.04%	12.01%
35-44	109	95	2	20	12	238	12.35%	14.79%
45-54	141	159	1	8	15	324	16.81%	14.91%
55-64	150	260	3	2	21	436	22.63%	12.12%
65-74	104	134	1	0	12	251	13.03%	7.55%
75+	44	41	0	1	2	88	4.57%	5.62%
<b>Total</b>						<b>1927</b>	<b>100%</b>	

Gender								
Gender	Small Groups	Open Houses	Youth Groups	Latino Groups	Website	Total	Sample Percentage	Regional Average
Male	404	454	105	42	83	1088	50.60%	49.04%
Female	427	383	125	57	70	1062	49.40%	51.96%
<b>Total</b>						<b>2150</b>	<b>100%</b>	

Race/Ethnicity								
Race/Ethnicity	Small Groups	Open Houses	Youth Groups	Latino Groups	Website	Total	Sample Percentage	Regional Average
Asian	15	3	9	3	1	31	1.45%	1.36%
African American / Black	204	88	84	3	12	391	18.30%	21.14%
Caucasian/White	566	694	119	2	133	1514	70.85%	69.95%
Hispanic/Latino	22	15	16	95	2	150	7.02%	5.64%
Native American	18	6	4	2	4	34	1.59%	.37%
Pacific Islander	2	0	0	0	0	2	0.09%	.01%
Multi-Racial / Other	4	3	6	0	2	15	0.70%	1.53%
<b>Total</b>						<b>2137</b>	<b>100%</b>	

Employment, Income and Education

Education							
Educational Level	Small Groups	Open Houses	Youth Groups	Latino Groups	Total	Sample Percentage	Regional Average
Less than High School	46	5	70	41	162	8.12%	19.04%
High School/GED	120	1936	77	24	257	12.88%	32.57%
Some College	133	148	80	13	374	18.74%	20.42%
Associate Degree	67	110	5	3	185	9.27%	8.52%
Bachelors Degree	265	283	4	13	565	28.30%	13.75%
Masters Degree	161	190	4	2	354	22.69%	5.70%
Professional Degree	25	35	0	1	61		
PhD	20	16	0	2	38		
<b>Total</b>					<b>1996</b>	<b>100%</b>	

\* Based on the population 25 years old and over

\*\* Education information not available for website submissions

Employment Status						
Employment Status	Small Groups	Open Houses	Youth Groups	Latino Groups	Total	Sample Percentage
Unemployed	84	24	69	24	201	9.59%
Employed Part-Time	80	68	38	14	200	9.54%
Temporary or Contract Work	9	12	2	6	29	1.38%
Employed Full-Time	406	449	8	35	898	42.84%
Self-Employed	83	106	10	4	203	9.69%
Homemaker or Student	58	22	118	12	210	10.02%
Retired	141	175	2	1	319	15.22%
Unable to Work	3	10	4	2	19	0.91%
Other	5	10	2	0	17	0.81%
<b>Total</b>					<b>2096</b>	<b>100%</b>

\* No regional data available

\*\* Employment status information not available for website submissions

Income Level										
Income Level	Small Groups	Open Houses	Youth Groups	Latino Groups	Website	Total	Sample Percentage	Regional Average	Regional Average Range	
Less than \$10,000	65	13	21	14	2	115	6.47%	8.56%		
\$10,000 - \$19,999	32	21	8	21	6	88	10.74%	19.38%	\$10,000 - \$24,999	
\$20,000 - \$29,999	40	33	9	17	4	103				
\$30,000 - \$39,999	62	49	4	14	3	132	14.10%	28.37%	\$25,000 - \$49,999	
\$40,000 - \$49,999	42	54	6	7	10	119				
\$50,000 - \$59,999	50	65	10	7	11	143	15.11%	18.58%	\$50,000 - \$74,999	
\$60,000 - \$69,999	51	55	8	3	9	126				
\$70,000 - \$79,999	48	51	7	0	15	121	19.76%	11.50%	\$75,000 - \$99,999	
\$80,000 - \$89,999	48	61	5	0	6	120				
\$90,000 - \$99,999	44	48	10	3	6	111				
\$100,000 - \$149,999	121	210	18	1	22	372	20.90%	9.2%		
Over \$150,000	96	95	18	1	20	230	12.92%	5.04%		
						<b>Total</b>	<b>1780</b>	<b>100%</b>		

\*In 2010 inflation-adjusted dollars

\*\*Regional average range

Employment Type						
Sector	Small Groups	Open Houses	Youth Groups	Latino Groups	Total	Sample Percentage
For-Profit	106	82	19	30	237	15.82%
Religious/Charitable	26	13	0	3	42	2.80%
Professional	115	127	9	13	264	17.62%
Education	96	66	23	4	189	12.62%
Government	127	219	3	2	351	23.43%
Other Non-Profit	94	89	3	4	190	12.68%
Employed w/o Pay in Family Business	8	12	4	1	25	1.67%
Research	0	3	0	0	3	.20%
Medical	24	14	4	2	44	2.94%
Sales	24	24	7	2	57	3.81%
Other	39	49	5	3	96	6.41%
<b>Total</b>					<b>1498</b>	<b>100%</b>

\* No regional data available

\*\*Employment type information not available for website submissions

### Household & Marital Status

Home Ownership							
Home Ownership Type	Small Groups	Open Houses	Youth Groups	Latino Groups	Total	Sample Percentage	Regional Average
Own Single-Family	581	704	90	29	1404	77.64%	73.02%
Own Multi-Family	30	27	7	12	76		
Rent Single-Family	87	50	16	29	182	12.39%	26.97%
Rent Multi-Family	13	8	9	24	54		
Live with Friend or Family	57	17	70	2	146	7.66%	N/A
Other Rent-Free Living Situation	22	7	13	2	44	2.31%	N/A
<b>Total</b>					<b>1906</b>	<b>100%</b>	

\* Home ownership information not available for website submissions

Current Marital Status							
Marital status	Small Groups	Open Houses	Youth Groups	Latino Groups	Total	Sample Percentage	Regional Average
Single	241	101	218	48	608	30.48%	29.27%
Married	469	622	7	36	1134	56.84%	52.31%
Domestic Partner	10	13	4	7	34	1.70%	N/A
Divorced/Separated	79	66	4	5	154	7.72%	13.61%
Widowed	28	34	2	1	65	3.26%	8.05%
<b>Total</b>					<b>1995</b>	<b>100%</b>	

\* Based on the population 15 years old and over

\*\* Current marital status information not available for website submissions

## Final Theming Report

### Question #1

**Is there a place that illustrates the best of your community or our region that you appreciate most? It could be a downtown area, a neighborhood, a workplace, a natural area – anything.**

2,215 total responses (Some responses were coded into more than one theme.)

THEMES	# TIMES HEARD	ILLUSTRATIVE QUOTES
Downtowns	593	Uptown, would like to be a resident Uptown Shelby It would have to be downtown Belmont Downtown area, the community has done a great job with the parks in Kannapolis historic homes and buildings downtown Salisbury - this area provides a sense of community, pride, provokes a calmness, peace Downtown area - I love the diversity of the city and other resources including the cultural, restaurants, etc.
Parks	355	Lake Norman parks Abundance of parks available all across the county that is convenient for local citizens to enjoy outdoor activities for free or low cost Andrew Jackson state park is a place I have enjoyed since childhood - it represents history and the addition of its hanging rock property below heath springs
Natural Assets	297	Lake Norman Catawba River Rivers, Lakes, Mountains South Fork River
Neighborhood	272	The Brandon Oaks neighborhood in Indian Trail Plaza Midwood at Thomas/Commonwealth Neighborhood - the Adnah Church Road, Winterberry Rd. area My neighborhood, street
Community Asset	233	Local Libraries NC Research Campus International airport JF Herley YMCA The Bank of America building uptown, Lupies

THEMES	# TIMES HEARD	ILLUSTRATIVE QUOTES
Cultural Assets	114	Catawba cultural center Bechtler Museum of Modern Art Reed Gold Mine
Open Space / Green Space	105	No high density, open spaces The open spaces and abundant vegetation around where I live I'm into nature so the open fields and areas are the best features of Union County
Education and Education Assets	93	Winthrop University Cleveland County Schools Schools

### Bottom Line:

The top five responses when we presented theming in March were:

1. Downtown
2. Parks
3. Natural Asset
4. Neighborhood
5. Community Asset

The current top five is identical to the order of the 1325 responses that were presented in March. In fact, the balance of the top group is also similar to the list in March – with Cultural Assets and Open Space switching places between March and April.

The top five continues to represent more than half of the coded responses.

The argument could be made that Parks, Natural Assets and Open Space/Green Space all speak to the same general aspect of life in the region. In fact, Open Space/Green Space was included just so that the range of this interest to responders could be shown – its frequency falls below the top group. If those numbers were combined it would be an overwhelming count. However, in analyzing the data, people are using substantially different language to share their thoughts in these different ways – so they remain separated.

Coding a response to Downtown continues to be a compilation of specific mentions i.e. Downtown Rock Hill as well as the more general word “downtown,” “historic downtown” etc.

## Question #2

**What are three words or phrases you would use to describe this place to a visitor?**

2,215 total responders x 3 answers = @ 6,645 responses. (Some responses were coded into more than one theme.)

THEMES	# TIMES HEARD	ILLUSTRATIVE QUOTES
Quality of Place: Beauty	398	Beautiful Setting Visually pleasing Beautiful area Attractive Beautiful-great architecture Absolutely beautiful
Friendly	347	Friendly
Quality of Place	325	Dynamic Enduring Pleasant Fresh Authentic
Fun	187	Fun!
Natural Asset	178	Beautiful landscape and forest Outside areas Lake
Relaxing/Calming	170	Renewing Serene
Historic	169	Historic
Quality of Place: Peaceful	167	Peaceful
Ease of Access: Walkable, Close, Accessible	166	Charming pedestrian oriented Pedestrian-Friendly Open Access Walkable Easily Accessible Compact

**Bottom Line:**

The top responses when we presented theming in March were:

1. Friendly
2. Quality of Place
3. Quality of Place: Beauty
4. Ease of Access: Walkable, Close, Accessible
5. Historic
6. Relaxing/Calming
7. Open Space/Green space

There has been some shift in the top group, but nothing very dramatic. Within the two groupings (around 300 responses and around 180 responses) there is very little numerical separation. Consequently, the ranking is not significant, but the positioning of these responses in the top group is of interest.

There were 117 responses that could be themed as “Negative Quality of Space.”

## Question #3

**What are some things about this place that are especially important to you?**

2,215 total responses (Some responses were coded into more than one theme.)

THEMES	# TIMES HEARD	ILLUSTRATIVE QUOTES
Natural Assets	209	Preserved forest areas Natural spaces Wildlife and animals
Ease of Access: Walkable, Close, Accessible	193	Publicly accessible, represents highest aspirations/achievements, a place for everyone Proximity, sense of community, maintaining the personality of NC Central piedmont area, accessibility I85 etc., stable community
Safety	187	Safe Secure
Recreation	184	Can exercise in a scenic area Recreation areas Recreation for young people
Open Space/Green Space	178	Open Space Will never be developed The preservation of natural wilderness, the opportunity to retreat into nature, the availability to a large cross-section of users That is a natural environment, it is quiet place to enjoy a walk
Education	166	Education Schools New Tech High School
Historic	136	The history and contribution that the corridor has contributed to the city, state and country

**Bottom Line:**

A comparison of top responses over the last three theming reports:

February	March	April
Open Space/Green Space	Ease of Access: Walkable, Close, Accessible	Natural Assets
Ease of Access: Walkable, Close, Accessible	Open Space/Green Space	Ease of Access: Walkable, Close, Accessible
Safety	Safety	Safety
Historic	Natural Assets	Recreation
Education	Education	Open Space/Green Space
	Historic	Education
	Recreation	Historic

The top group in importance to responders has remained effectively the same – some items moving up or down over time, but the universe of what is most important is quite similar.

There were some responses which would be considered as potentially negative about the CONNECT effort. We did not see an increase in the number of this type of response in this theming report. Previously, we reported the following verbatims:

“KEEP THE U.N., money, which is mostly our citizen's money, out of the US business!”

“The lack of regulation of many aspects of a person's life and enterprise makes the quality of life greater. This, in turn, gives the individual the ability to determine their own destiny rather than it be dictated to them by a plan written by outside influences.”

“Ownership, freedom, low taxes, community, less government, safety”

“Personal property rights - ability to use my property as I see fit”

“Autonomy from Centralina Council of Governments, a proactive county planning board that protects property rights, a county commission that does not welcome regional planning from Connect, CCOG or the Lee Institute.”

## Question #4

**What is the one thing that is most important to you from your list above?**

1,630 out of 2,215 responses, just under 75% of respondents answered this question. This percentage has been consistent (Some responses were coded into more than one theme.)

THEMES	# TIMES HEARD	ILLUSTRATIVE QUOTES
Natural Assets	100	Nature gets you off the grid Mountain personality of NC Nature/wildlife
Safe	88	Safe
Family	70	Family
Open space/Green space	66	Fresh open space for you to relax Natural areas Undeveloped
Education	62	School system is great choice Educational opportunity (Graystone, Pfeiffer) A good education speaks for itself
Recreation	51	Recreation Gives the youth a place for recreation I like that these are fun recreation option nearby, USNWC, Sherman branch, kings mtn.
Jobs	43	The business the campus brings to our local industries and opportunity for new small businesses Jobs to keep our youth at home
Ease of Access	42	Draw for activity and accessible Walkability
Quality of Place	40	Spiritual Meaningful Authenticity
Cultural Assets	38	Cultural outlet Transportation Museum Access to the arts Cultural - good for the soul
People	38	Great people The people People
Historic	37	Historic

**Bottom Line:**

The top responses in March in order were:

1. Natural Assets
2. Safe
3. Open space/Green space
4. Education
5. Family
6. Ease of Access
7. Civic investment/pride/volunteerism
8. Cultural Assets
9. Jobs
10. Historic

This question continues to be the first place with a drop-off in the responses.

**Question #5**

**When you think of the importance of the place you identified, what might be some of those deeper meanings?**

1,844 responses out of 2,215 respondents, about 83% of respondents answered this question – which is consistent with last reporting. (Some responses were coded into more than one theme.)

THEMES	# TIMES HEARD	ILLUSTRATIVE QUOTES
Safe	290	Safe I feel safe here in Anson County Safety of the community Security
Family	197	Family Home, family, roots, history Children and family
Home	192	I think of my family going out together and enjoying family time. It is a place where I have invested to call home on Beatties Ford Rd Home
Connection	145	Connection to other people Meaningful and continuing relationships which promote better understanding and clearer focus into the future
Natural Assets	134	Connection to nature Commune with nature in her setting Nature thriving with life
Community	128	Sense of being a part of community Community
Relaxing/Calming	111	Relaxing No stress The most relaxing place on earth I'm relaxing unless I am too close to a cliff!
Heritage	103	Old ways should be preserved Taking care of the heritage of the place A connection to our roots - where our sustenance comes from

**Bottom Line:**

The top responses when we presented theming in March were:

1. Safe
2. Family
3. Home
4. Connection
5. Natural Assets
6. Historic
7. Heritage

The top three responses for this question have remained the same (Safe, Family, Home) and in the identical order for each of the three theming reports. The top five have been the same for this and the previous theming report (Safe, Family, Home, Connection, Natural Assets). Community and Relaxing/Calm have joined the top group in this report.

**Question #6**

**What is the one thing that is most important to you from your list above?**

1,300 responses out of 2,215 respondents, a little less than 60% of respondents answered this question which is consistent with previous reporting. (Some responses were coded into more than one theme.)

THEMES	# TIMES HEARD	ILLUSTRATIVE QUOTES
Family	114	Family All about family
Safe	108	Safe place for young and old I feel safe and secure
Home	72	Home
Connection	70	Relationships People can connect Fellowship
Natural Assets	60	Wildlife Connection to nature
Community	51	Community Tight knit community
Quality of Place	44	Great place to grow up Life source Necessary
Relaxing/Calming	41	Serenity Relaxation Place to pause and reflect

**Bottom Line:**

The top responses when we presented theming in February were:

1. Family
2. Safe
3. Connection
4. Community
5. Home
6. Natural Assets

While there is some rearrangement in the top group of responses, the responses are similar between the different theming reports. For example, the top six responses are identical between the March and April report.

This remains the place where we see the greatest drop-off. The connection between Question 5 and 6 continues to show with Safe, Family, Home and Connection showing up in lead positions in both questions.

**Question #7**

**Our region has many features that serve different purposes. Please indicate the feature that best represents the place you named in Question 1.**

1,922 total responses out of 2,215 respondents, about 87% of respondents answered this question

FEATURE	# TIMES SELECTED		FEATURE	# TIMES SELECTED
Town Center/Main Street	248		Shopping centers	38
Community parks & greenways	242		Farmers' markets	35
State parks, forests, preserved land	215		Shopping malls	32
Rivers, streams & lakes	149		Larger lot housing	32
Neighborhoods with housing, offices & shops together	125		Grocery stores	31
Other	107		Apartments & condominiums	25
School, college & university campus	99		Country stores	19
Arts & community centers	81		Airport	16
Shade tree neighborhoods	79		Smaller lot housing	15
Houses on acreage	69		Industrial areas	14
Neighborhoods with different kinds of housing together	65		Neighborhoods with all the same type of housing	13
Working farms	57		High-rise housing	11
Metropolitan centers	51		Office parks	12
Museum & concert venues	50		High-rise offices	8
Sports facilities	48		Mobile home parks	5
Medical centers	38			

**Representative list of “other” responses:**

*\*A full list of responses is available upon request*

- Historic
  - Historic districts and preserved properties
  - Historic downtown area
- The fact that all of these are available in this region
- Mixed use development
- Mixed use & greenway
- Where neighbors are neighborly
- Neighborhood with nearby retail/service
- Local businesses
  - Mom and pop businesses
  - Family owned businesses in small community
- Church, churches, my church
- Townhome
- Discount store
- Movies
- Party life – shopping, food, etc.
- Diverse communities – small communities and working farms
- Small town
  - Small town community
- Non-profit
- Low density
- Convenience, restaurants
- Gathering places/Community gathering places
- Independent businesses and farms which are the heart of the community
- Restaurants
- Home sweet home
- Downtown
- College campus, recreation & fitness center, concert venues, shopping malls, state parks
- Pedestrian friendly
- More activities
- County courthouse, museum, administration building
- Unique restaurants and entertainment
- There is more than one
- Neighborhood with different kinds of housing, restaurants, grocery, shopping, parks, access to outdoor life, and safety
- Nature and commerce mixed well
- More solar energy farms, a great many more
- Hotel
- Community recreation
- Not being forced to live by someone else’s rules
- Libraries/Library
- Research facility
- Trail greenway network designed for connectivity
- Thought leaders convene here to share ideas for all of the above that currently exist in the region & could/should exist in the region
- Nature
  - County Nature Preserves
  - Mountains
  - Mountains and nature

**Question #8**

Now take another look at this list of features in our region. Select the five that you feel are most important for the future of your community and our region.

2,215 total respondents, not every respondent selected five features

FEATURE	# TIMES SELECTED		FEATURE	# TIMES SELECTED
Community parks & greenways	842		Industrial areas	221
School, college & university campus	749		Airport	216
State parks, forests, preserved land	647		Houses on acreage	189
Rivers, streams & lakes	634		Shopping malls	184
Arts & community centers	583		Larger lot housing	176
Town center/Main street	581		Metropolitan centers	163
Medical centers	486		Other	173
Neighborhoods with housing, offices & shops together	443		Apartments & condominiums	144
Farmers' markets	414		Country stores	111
Shade tree neighborhoods	411		Smaller lot housing	93
Working farms	378		Office parks	93
Museum & concert venues	334		Neighborhoods with all the same type of housing	60
Neighborhoods with different kinds of housing together	329		High-rise housing	41
Grocery stores	310		Mobile home parks	32
Sports facilities	302		High-rise offices	30
Shopping centers	290			

**Representative list of “other” responses:**

*\*A full list of responses is available upon request*

- Neighborhood with nearby retail/services
- Theater
- Historic areas/Historic homes/Historic Business
- Seniors
  - Senior citizen & comm. building
    - Senior housing
    - Aged population
- Low income housing
- Transportation/Transit
  - HOV Lanes
- Library/Libraries
- Mixed viable use
- Local businesses
  - Buy local areas
  - Small local businesses
  - Mom and pop businesses
  - Family owned businesses in small community
- Church/Churches/House of worship
- Human service agencies
- Clubs and bars
- Public transportation
  - Rail transportation
  - Light rail/streetcar services
  - Transportation choices
  - Comprehensive mass transportation system
- Discount store
- Movies
- Community gathering place/gathering places
- Sidewalks
- More downtown retail or grocery store for people living in town to walk to those areas
- Safety
  - Maintain it safe
  - Public safety
  - Peaceful place, non-congested, respectful neighbors, safety
  - Safety
- Fire departments
- Entertainment parks
- Convenient stores
- Places for entertainment
- Parks
  - State park
  - Parks and recreation facilities
  - Nature centers
- Housing and industry clustered around existing infrastructure so that farmland can be preserved
- Bike and pedestrian facilities
- Mixed use – a little bit of everything
- Courthouse
- YMCA
- Research facility
- A vibrant city center
- Nature
- Downtown with variety - shops, entertainment, restaurants, arts, museum
- Rural area - mountains, farm land

**Question #9**

**When you think about transportation for the future needs of your community, which features are the most important to you? Select up to three.**

2,215 total respondents, not every respondent selected three features

FEATURE	# TIMES SELECTED
More sidewalks, trails, other safe places to walk	1073
Improved roads	896
Better connected streets that provide a choice of routes	711
More bike lanes, paths, other safe places to bike	627
New/more rail transit	553
New/more bus or van transit	511
Access to inter-city passenger rail service	354
More new roads	256
Other	173

**Representative list of “other” responses:**

*\*A full list of responses is available upon request*

- Scenic roads, trees, attractive buildings & lawns, variety of businesses
- Space from people to decrease congestion
- Farm equipment lanes
- Leave it alone
- Reduced traffic, more places for residents to benefit from exercise
- Repair all roads before building more
- Intercity transportation in region
- Left turn access in center of town
- Less regional interloping into Rowan County’s affairs, we have elected county commissioners to plan OUR future
- Wider highway lanes and freeway development
- Services available via mass transit
- Traffic light
- Dave Lyle Blvd extension
- Golf cart path for seniors
- More senior friendly – large signs, lit signs, longer crossing lights
- Larger font on signs
- Rest stop at 4 lane crossings for walkers and other slow ambulation
- Better connected municipalities with rail
- Better maintained potholes filled, resurfacing
- More thread trail for multi-mode travel
- Highway 24/27 widened to Sanford to get to Raleigh faster
- Assistance with aging infrastructure
- Keep transportation on plan as is
- Improved road maintenance of existing roadways
- More planning so that residential areas (streets) are not used as highways
- Bypass/Toll road
- Railroad crossing improvements
- Availability of parking in downtown areas
- Public transportation
  - Buses (expanded schedule)
  - Light rail/High speed rail
  - Express rail
  - Taxis
  - Safe, efficient, effective
- Finish all current projects
- Better security on buses
- There is no good way to travel east from charlotte
- Car share program
- Better transportation planning
- Interstate access defined
- Minimum of 30 minutes to get to interstate
- Dedicated, safe and smartly designed bicycle lanes / paths.
- Stop lights in & out of neighborhoods
- Handicap ramps on all sidewalks and all business handicap accessible to the public
- Roads
  - Better commuter rds to metro area
  - Roads that allow traffic to flow better e1. 4 lanes from Concord to Salisbury, maybe that could fall under improved roads
  - No more roads. When you build a road is not to uncongest a road, actually is to fill with more cars.
  - Side road need paving
  - Stop having/change roads that change names without rhyme or reason
- Better designed traffic patterns
- Quit spending millions on greenways
- Alternative road and intersection design (e.g. roundabouts, medians, access management)
- Access for people who live in more rural areas

**Question #10**

**When you think about the future transportation needs of your community, which feature listed is the most important to you?**

1,631 total responses out of 2,215 respondents, about 74% of respondents answered this question

FEATURE	# TIMES SELECTED
Improved roads	365
More sidewalks, trails, other safe places to walk	333
Better-connected streets that provide a choice of routes	182
New/more rail transit	177
New/more bus or van transit	176
Other	175
More bike lanes, paths, other safe places to bike	100
Access to inter-city passenger rail service	60
More new roads	45

**Representative list of “other” responses:**

*\*A full list of responses is available upon request*

- Toll road/bypass
- Public transportation
  - Safe, efficient and effective
  - Buses, rail and taxis
  - Improved – local/regional
  - Light rail
  - Rapid rail transit...nationally connected high speed as in 150+MPH
  - Subway
  - Expansion of light rail
- Transit
  - Transit for families, students, workers & the elderly!
  - Expanded transit opportunities for smaller urbanized areas
- Left turn access in center of town
- Dave Lyle Blvd extension
- Golf cart paths for seniors
- More senior friendly – large signs, lit signs, longer crossing lights
- More Thread Trail for multi-mode travel
- Assistance with aging infrastructure
- Keep transportation plan as is
- Having a choice to travel without having to drive
- Bike trail to keep them off busy dangerous roads
- More planning so that residential areas (streets) are not used as highways
- More routes to make for a better choice of routes
- More/new restricted access highways to help economic development in rural areas
- Safe
  - Safe communities to walk
  - Safe places to walk
- Availability of parking in downtown areas
- Safe multi modal transportation options
- Stop lights, can barely get out of neighborhood more of the time
- Space from people to decrease congestion
- Reduced traffic, more places for residents to benefit from exercise
- Better transportation planning
- Better maintained roads/highways
- Roads
  - Improved roads through pennies for progress
  - Roads that allow good traffic flow
  - Repaired roadways
  - Wider roads turning lanes
- Traffic, choice of routes
- Maintain what we have
- Sidewalks
  - Sidewalks and bike paths go together
  - Sidewalks and trails. Ideally walking to a destination for shopping and entertainment.
  - Bike/walking trails
  - Walking trails/greenways
- Connectivity
- Better/sensible land-use planning
- Finishing existing projects

## Question #11

Please identify what you think the biggest challenge for the future of our region is and why.

2,022 total responses out of 2,215 respondents, 91% of respondents answered this question (Some responses were coded into more than one theme.)

RANK	THEMES	# TIMES HEARD	ILLUSTRATIVE QUOTES
#1	Jobs; economic development; poverty; unemployment	390	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Economic development because jobs provide engine for better schools, art, standard of living and an area that is listed in the top ten places to live in the US.</li> <li>Lack of jobs, growing unemployment because businesses have closed and we are not effectively recruiting new companies</li> <li>Quality of life and economic opportunity for the next generation.</li> </ul>
#2	Transportation; traffic; walkability	297	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Getting around if you don't have a car because the bus is so expensive and bus stops aren't everywhere.</li> <li>Adequate roadways for the level of traffic because going north on 77 takes such a long time during the start and end of the day.</li> <li>Transportation because we do not have a walkable city.</li> </ul>
#3	Infrastructure to support growth	203	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aging Infrastructure (roads, utilities, homes) because it is costly to replace 50+ year old infrastructure.</li> <li>The large number of people moving here because the infrastructure is not here to support them.</li> <li>Extensive deteriorating development and infrastructure because this area grows outward rather than reinvests.</li> </ul>
#4	Managing growth; sustainable development	201	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Managing growth because we have little real understanding of how corporatized profit-based growth truly impact community regions and landscapes long-term.</li> <li>To develop and/or maintain our identity because the chance for over growth and becoming another mega-urban core "Atlanta" is possible.</li> <li>Growth because uncontrolled growth can be damaging for the community.</li> </ul>
#5	Schools; education; skills development	154	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improving grade schools overall performance scores because better schools make better citizens and will improve the overall community.</li> <li>Finishing school and making it to college because school is not pushed to be important in today's culture.</li> <li>Education...the region is not positioning itself well as a competitive, well-educated population.</li> </ul>

RANK	THEMES	# TIMES HEARD	ILLUSTRATIVE QUOTES
#6	Environmental quality—air, water, land	113	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clean water, land for crops, clean air because our health depends on these.</li> <li>• Protecting the environment because growth prompts pollution.</li> <li>• Lack of depth in understanding the importance of water and energy because of the current abundance we all share.</li> </ul>
#7	Violence, drugs, crime & lack of safety, especially for youth and elders	99	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seniors feeling safe about walking or going to downtown or parks - safety for the elders.</li> <li>• Violence because there are too many innocent people getting hurt because of a misunderstanding.</li> <li>• Drugs in my community because all the kids nowadays only care about alcohol and drugs.</li> </ul>
#8	Lack of funds	97	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial resources to provide requested services because community expectations and demand for low taxes.</li> <li>• Funding because funding provides services, with the population rapidly expanding more funding is needed and required to meet the demand of services.</li> <li>• The biggest challenge is having a need for our community but not having funding to resolve the problem.</li> </ul>
#9	Sense of community & the common good; incl. unity across demographic lines	96	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain a sense of good community because of new development that helps people stay more connected.</li> <li>• Keep the community together, the history and the past.</li> <li>• That we still act divided by race, class, faith--because it leads us to not really talk with one another and realize how much we have in common, and how little we have to fear from each other.</li> </ul>
#10	Attracting business and industry (to rural areas)	90	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business development, there are numerous empty commercial buildings that are not being used. It's a waste to continue to build on undeveloped land, we should utilize what we have.</li> <li>• Meeting the needs of the small communities and towns, to be able to continue to provide the services that they do, without increasing taxation on the residence. To do this, we have to increase industries, people or both.</li> <li>• Improving business and employment opportunities because we must give businesses incentive to grow and succeed in this environment.</li> </ul>

RANK	THEMES	# TIMES HEARD	ILLUSTRATIVE QUOTES
#11	Cooperation and collaboration across (and within subsets of) the region so that all the region benefits	73	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regional cooperation because when push comes to shove, few are likely to sacrifice their jurisdiction for the good of the whole.</li> <li>Overcoming the political fights between groups because the fights are preventing the county for growing.</li> <li>Embracing a new vibrant direction that must be leveraged because the future of one region depends on it economically and socially.</li> </ul>
#12	Quality, affordable, inclusionary housing, including for seniors	62	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aging of the population because of the care they need in assisted living facilities.</li> <li>Options for safe, affordable, quality housing because many families struggle to secure reasonable housing.</li> <li>To provide choice of housing types because our population is getting more diverse each day.</li> </ul>

#### Bottom Line:

Jobs/economic development and transportation have remained the top two most frequently named biggest challenges facing the region. These two challenges combined account for more than one-third of the total responses.

Many of the top 12 themes have remained on the list throughout the Phase 1 engagement. “Environmental quality—air, water, land” has had the biggest increase in rank over time. It steadily increased its rank on the list, starting at #10 and landing at #6.

Two new themes emerged with this addition of responses. “Health of population and healthy lifestyles” and “access to (local) healthy food including grocery stores)” both emerged as themes, re-emphasizing citizens’ interest in preserving natural resources, including food systems. These themes ranked #25 and #27, respectively.

Excessive government regulation/ government interference, which emerged as a theme in the last round of theming, only constituted about 1% of total responses, ranking #19 on the list.

Nearly every response to this question fit into one of the themes cited here. A few were not able to be coded.

**Question #12**

**Fast forward 10 years. What would be the headline in your local newspaper if we had successfully met the challenges you mentioned?**

1,794 total responses out of 2,215 respondents, about 81% of respondents answered this question (Selected headlines that illustrate each of the top twelve themes from Question 11 are presented in the table below.)

THEMES	ILLUSTRATIVE “HEADLINES”
Jobs; economic development; poverty; unemployment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chester County wins award for the biggest turn-around in reaching educational goals; they attribute their lowest unemployment rate in 20 years to their targeted training.</li> <li>• Manufacturing returning to America—Technical colleges boon with workforce training.</li> <li>• Catawba Nation becomes top tourist destination in South Carolina.</li> <li>• Community secures new company to offer highly skilled tech jobs.</li> <li>• More than 70% of the productivity in this states comes out of Chester, Lancaster and York area, people no longer need to go to Charlotte for employment and services.</li> </ul>
Transportation; traffic; walkability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bus service now available in Stanley County.</li> <li>• No more hourly traffic coming to work and leaving from work and try to rush to get your child before you're charge to pay more if you're late picking them up.</li> <li>• Charlotte successfully enacts safe walking and biking trails throughout all major zip codes.</li> <li>• Gastonia back on track with the addition of the light rail system, jobs are now available farther away from home.</li> <li>• Today you can get anywhere in the region without owning a car!</li> </ul>
Infrastructure to support growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Richburg gets improved roads, new sidewalks.</li> <li>• Vibrant historic Salisbury used local resources to find necessary infrastructure improvements that benefit all of its citizens.</li> <li>• County finishes first phase of road improvement, residents approve next round of funding.</li> <li>• Mt. Pleasant shining example of how a water/sewer system should function.</li> <li>• Newly designed city: everything is easily accessible.</li> </ul>
Managing growth; sustainable development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suburban renaissance: how one small town is managing suburban growth without the sprawl.</li> <li>• Results of 521 corridor study are in – well planned community abounds.</li> <li>• Mt. Pleasant continues to grow in a controlled fashion.</li> <li>• Rapid growth in our region over the past 10 years is highlighted by smart growth.</li> <li>• Denton begins expansion with grand opening of the new grocery store.</li> </ul>

<p>Schools; education; skills development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Charlotte region ranks top of US schools—elementary to colleges and universities.</li> <li>• Students from less affluent school districts have a graduation rate similar to those of South Charlotte.</li> <li>• High school graduation at 95% in Chester County.</li> <li>• Universal Semi-Conductor Corp., the largest most diversified company in the world, announced today that they will be relocating their world headquarters and all of the their manufacturing facilities to Gaston County because of the standard of life and the plethora of well-trained employees.</li> <li>• Anson County schools has a 100% graduation rate with 100% of its children completing high school career or college ready.</li> </ul>
<p>Environmental quality—air, water, land</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Catawba River is clean and healthy!</li> <li>• Air pollution below federal standards.</li> <li>• Town of Huntersville excels in the sustainable use of its water resources.</li> <li>• Charlotte is the greenest most sustainable community in America.</li> <li>• 100% of Catawba River Basin meets basic water quality standards for the first time since 1972.</li> </ul>
<p>Violence, drugs, crime &amp; lack of safety, especially for youth and elders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You are safe in our community.</li> <li>• No shootings or break-ins have occurred since we have met the challenge.</li> <li>• Youth death rate at an all-time low.</li> <li>• Say good-bye to gang violence.</li> <li>• Now the children and teens have their own space.</li> </ul>
<p>Lack of funds</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For the first time in years, the city and county governments approved balanced budgets without any cuts to current programs and in many cases expansions in needed areas.</li> <li>• Funding sources identified.</li> <li>• City of Shelby receives grants for sidewalk and trail improvements.</li> <li>• City overcomes financial woes and Lincolnton is a better place to live.</li> <li>• Statesville making it rain.</li> </ul>
<p>Sense of community &amp; the common good; incl. unity across demographic lines</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have been on an exciting adventure with twists and turns, but towards the same agreed upon objective and after these ten years we have become better acquainted with different people that make up our community.</li> <li>• Understanding/respect for all members of Charlotte communities and their roles in history, development, and future.</li> <li>• Neighborhood Block Party has 100 in attendance!</li> <li>• Community working together meeting the needs of the community.</li> <li>• Racism Has Decreased significantly Over the Last Ten Years.</li> </ul>

<p>Attracting business and industry (to rural areas)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Surrounding cities, towns and counties feed and benefit from Charlotte growth engine.</li> <li>• New Costco to open in Salisbury, hiring 500 local people.</li> <li>• New businesses growing in Eastland Mall.</li> <li>• New businesses make Cleveland county their home.</li> <li>• Statesville area announces two new high tech industries to employ over 5000 people.</li> </ul>
<p>Cooperation and collaboration across (and within subsets of) the region so that all the region benefits</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We are working together to make a better region.</li> <li>• Local Governments Work Together to Seemingly Form a Regional Government.</li> <li>• Communities work together to share and protect resources and invest in infrastructure.</li> <li>• Region is best in nation because folks worked together and didn't care who got the credit.</li> <li>• Local governments agree on regional plan.</li> </ul>
<p>Quality, affordable, inclusionary housing, including for seniors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Affordable housing is now available in Stanly County.</li> <li>• No more waiting lists for affordable and safe housing for seniors.</li> <li>• This area figured it out...jobs with working wages and affordable housing opportunities = growing economy, better opportunities and a win/win for everyone.</li> <li>• There no homeless person sleeping on the street, there are homes for them all.</li> </ul>

### Question #13

**Is there anything else that is important to you about your community or our region that you want us to know?**

1,129 total responses out of 2,215. About 50% of people responded to this question. Most responses reinforced a theme from Question 11. (Some responses were coded into more than one theme.)

### Top Ten Responses

1. Many comments reflected people's **positive regard and pride for their local community and our region's assets**. This was the most frequent theme with **181 responses, or about 16%**.

#### REPRESENTATIVE QUOTES

- Truly beautiful place to live and raise children.
- Charlotte and the region have a great quality of life - let's keep it!
- They are all hard working and truly kind hearted individuals.
- We have a great region and we need to consistently and constantly be vigilant to preserve the great things about it, while we plan for future growth.
- I like how it is a small town with no traffic and you know a lot of the people who live in Statesville.
- Union is a great county with lots of caring people that will pull together to help others when the need arises.
- Our region is so diverse, mountains, lakes, diverse professional employment base, agricultural businesses, tourism, entertainment/sports mecca.
- In 30 years here, I have never ceased to be amazed at what determined people can achieve for the good of the community.
- The friendliness and warmth of our population hopefully will never change.
- Our community holds lots of potential; we are ready and eager to see positive growth and change.
- If I chose to live here over NYC, that is saying something about the draw of Charlotte.
- With the tremendous assets in culture, arts, natural resources, excellent healthcare, and quality education, there is no reason for a lack of success. All of the qualities for a sustainable community exist.
- Gaston County has a lot to offer from Crowders Mountain to Catawba River, great place – great people.
- We are truly blessed. Growing up here and then coming back post-college it would have been nice to have more nightlife. I think you guys are doing a great job on trying to promote a Safe, Happy and Healthy Future for our area. THANK YOU!

2. **146 respondents, or about 13%** used the opportunity to **expand on an opinion or provide social commentary**. In most cases, these comments did not fit into a theme. The following quotes show the range and diversity of comments.

REPRESENTATIVE QUOTES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Textile corridor vision needs implementation.</li> <li>• It could be a better community with visionary leaders rather than those content with status quo.</li> <li>• The downtown area should represent all races and cultures if we are to become a vibrant community.</li> <li>• I would like to plan - not react to - the future, shoot for the moon, if you fail, join a very large club, but if you don't make the attempt, that seems almost unambitious.</li> <li>• I believe there are many historical aspects that are being forgotten, or worse, simply ignored as unimportant.</li> <li>• Interstate 485. I have lived in Atlanta, GA for many years. Having Interstate 485 completed will allow better connectivity to the entire city, and encourage business growth to all parts of the city.</li> <li>• The future of this and many other communities rely on people who are willing to step up and speak up for their community.</li> <li>• I have noticed that the unemployment rate is dropping but I think that the jobs that are available are hard to find. I think that jobs who are hiring should be advertised for more people to see easily.</li> <li>• Growth indefinitely is not a natural phenomenon growth will eventually stop because of disease, crime and environmental degradation; planned growth has to have limits.</li> <li>• We may want to take more risks and let people take out loans for start-up companies, offer large seminars on how companies can start and grow, advertise more for local resources that may be free to citizens that they may not know yet.</li> <li>• Community planning is important, allowing a small town feel that anticipates transportation, poverty, wealth, health, governance and leadership is important to residents.</li> <li>• Charlotte may be the engine but the rest of us are the tired, oil and gas - without us the engine wont not only start but will rust away.</li> <li>• We believe in individual property rights, tax income one time, keep taxes local, we believe in the constitution and do not want to be governed by the fed's or the UN agenda.</li> <li>• We are no different than any other region, thanks in part to international coordination of regional efforts to direct elected and appointed officials.</li> <li>• Cultural, ethnic and social diversity is happening even in the face of resistance from rabid conservatism.</li> <li>• There are plenty of sidewalks but pedestrians won't use them. Cars constantly parked on side of road, speeding &amp; hazardous driving in newer neighborhoods.</li> </ul>

RANK	THEMES	REPRESENTATIVE QUOTES
#3	Sense of community & the common good; incl. unity across demographic lines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Anything we can do to help communities create a sense of community (ie: ownership of the development of their community).</li> <li>Diversity can work when people come together for a common good.</li> <li>I think we need to accent positively that all people are equal and deserve the same rights and privileges.</li> </ul>
#4	Transportation; traffic; walkability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No community in the USA (any region) has succeeded in solving traffic congestion. It would be great to be better at it than other regions since transportation connects us all.</li> <li>Access to public transportation on weekends should be improved.</li> <li>I hope that public transit expands in the region so we can give up our cars and still live our lives. Transit options for me are basically from work to home and I would love to be able to run errands (more easily) via transit.</li> </ul>
#5	Infrastructure to support growth, including roads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>That we keep in mind that we have resources are available as we continue to grow; water, sewer, roads.</li> <li>Stanly County needs a coordinated infrastructure plan (involved county and municipalities).</li> <li>Please incorporate sidewalks, so incredibly important to society!</li> </ul>
#6	Environmental quality – air, water, land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We have to take care of the environment as we plan for this growth.</li> <li>Keeping pollution down and under control (especially car, bus, truck, etc.). We've got to reduce our carbon footprint.</li> <li>It is important to support and protect the wildlife and birds in this region. Both are critical ecological indicators that reflect the effects of human activity and growth.</li> </ul>
#7	Attracting business and industry (to rural areas)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Future employment centers are vital.</li> <li>We need help recruiting companies into our area, what industries can we recruit now with existing infrastructure to get immediate jobs.</li> <li>The area is great and I wish business could be attached to this area without paying industry to come here.</li> </ul>

RANK	THEMES	REPRESENTATIVE QUOTES
#8	Jobs; economic development; poverty; unemployment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rowan County's economy is still headed down; it has not hit bottom and bounced back up yet.</li> <li>The job market has to grow in order to keep Charlotte one of the best places to live. Let's put NC Charlotte at the top of the list to make Charlotte a beacon of light for all to follow.</li> <li>The college and the college life is important to me now, but the job opportunities and internships are the most important to me.</li> </ul>
#9	Schools; education; skills development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Education and earning/learning opportunity at all levels.</li> <li>Education equality.</li> <li>Education is one of very few issues that touch ALL citizens and neighborhoods, and if we don't use it as an opportunity to unify and engage, the social fabric will continue to tear.</li> </ul>
#10	Managing growth; sustainable development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There should be development in some places, but the entire region should not be completely urbanized, we need a happy medium between rural and urban.</li> <li>Get onboard with sustainable development. Why can't I find a rental, condo or house which already includes solar power construction and or rain / grey water conservation in this entire state? In more non-parochial parts of the country and the world, this is already occurring.</li> <li>We must grow to be able to sustain but we don't want to "explode."</li> </ul>

Most of the top themes surfacing in Question 11 are seen again, but in a different order, in Question 13.

**Question #14**

**Additional Comments**

320 total responses out of 2,215 respondents, 14% of respondents answered this question Responses generally align with themes that emerged in Question 11.

<b>QUOTES ILLUSTRATING THE RANGE OF RESPONSES</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As a former textile community, we have diversified our workforce, but unemployment remains in double digits and our population is aging, young people are leaving the county which will put a strain on our tax base in the coming years.</li> <li>• Collaboration is a huge strength in our community but many people do not realize how much of a role it has played in the great things being done.</li> <li>• Children are experiencing a nature deficiency and research shows that children who don't learn and play in natural environment don't develop a respect for nature, too much technology and lack of nature experiences lead to more depression, obesity, ADD, ADHD and other health problems.</li> <li>• Thank you for asking us our opinion - it is rare and much appreciate; keep green environment-friendly and eco-friendly in mind; we only rent it from our kids; green space with urban growth connected to farming communities all co-existing.</li> <li>• There are many professional Hispanics and they cannot work in their profession.</li> <li>• Charlotte has a lot to offer but the rate of growth is somewhat scary. Not interested in living in an "Atlanta" type city. Will move if the growth is too much too soon.</li> <li>• We have to change the way housing is viewed and planned. Union county is the perfect example of the wasteful use of our resources in single family subdivisions.</li> <li>• I believe we need to pay special attention to our local food system. The ability to provide fresh local food is an economic and health issue and will be critical as we grow in population.</li> <li>• I would like to read about what decisions were made and how decisions were made.</li> <li>• Please note that Rowan and Cabarrus Counties withdrew from CCOG because we do not want your tentacles extending into our county's business—at all.</li> <li>• Taxes and fees are killing small business—can't afford to run a small business in Mecklenburg County—too much paperwork, property taxes. The government has its hand in all your pockets.</li> <li>• If we could shift from the traditional view that riding a bus is for poor people...if we could shift the view that affordable housing=high crime...if we could shift the view that "if I don't see it, it isn't a big problem" ... we hide poverty very well in our community...if we could create more openness for opportunity, greater access, what a community we could be.</li> <li>• Without jobs to keep or attract people to this area, houses will become vacant when the old folks pass; we need to increase population in this area and keep our young folks here.</li> </ul>

# County Phase I Reports

Anson County, NC



Vibrant Communities – Robust Region

## ANSON 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

"Anson New Technology High School is probably the best that happened to the community because it shows students different ways of learning"

"We are so fortunate to have the wildlife refuge in Anson county"

"The parks around Anson like Peachland Park"

"Lots of open land, wide open places"

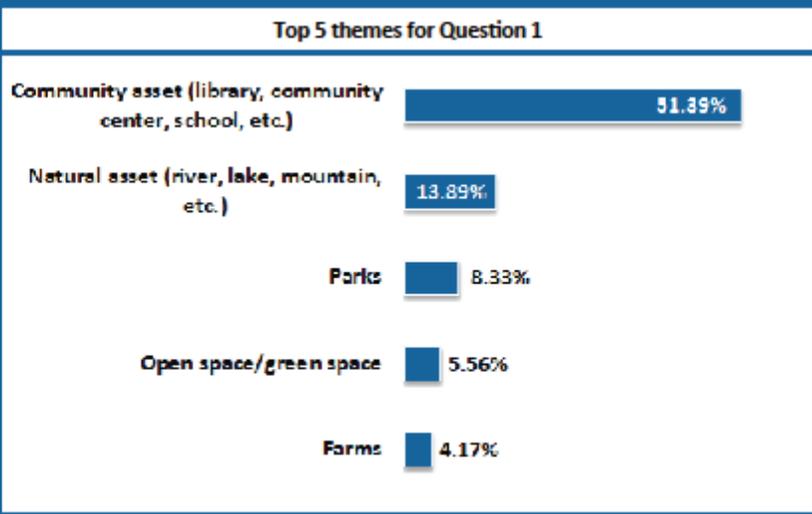
"My grandfather's farm"

### 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?



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



Friendly ...  
Relaxing & Calming ...  
Great place

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



Education ...  
Family ...  
Recreation

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



Connection ...  
Heritage ... Safety

All responses are listed on the *CONNECT Our Future* website at [www.ConnectOurFuture.org](http://www.ConnectOurFuture.org)



Vibrant Communities – Robust Region

# ANSON COUNTY, NC

**WHERE DID WE TALK TO PEOPLE?**

Open house on November 15, 2012 in Wadesboro at South Piedmont Community College

Small group on January 15, 2013 with the Anson Agricultural Producers at the Anson County Cooperative Extension Center

Small group on January 15, 2013 with the Anson County New Technology High School

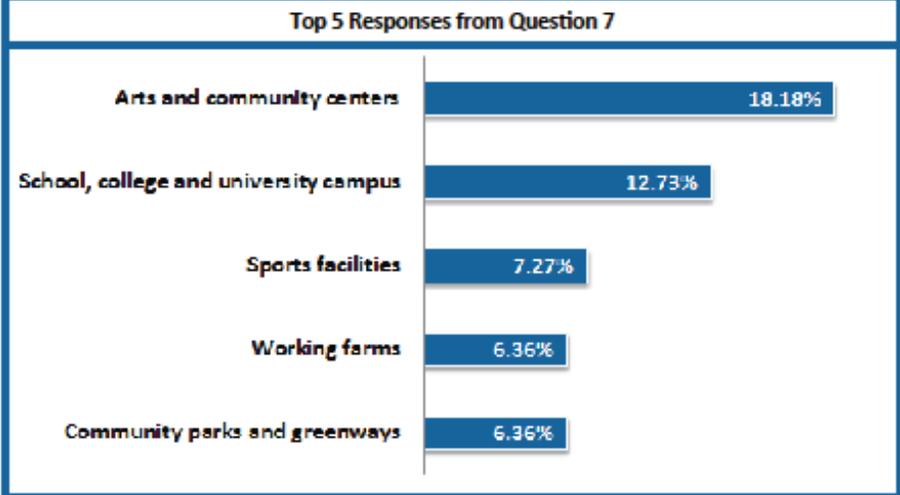
Small group on February 19, 2013 with HOLLA

Youth small group on March 7, 2013 with HOLLA

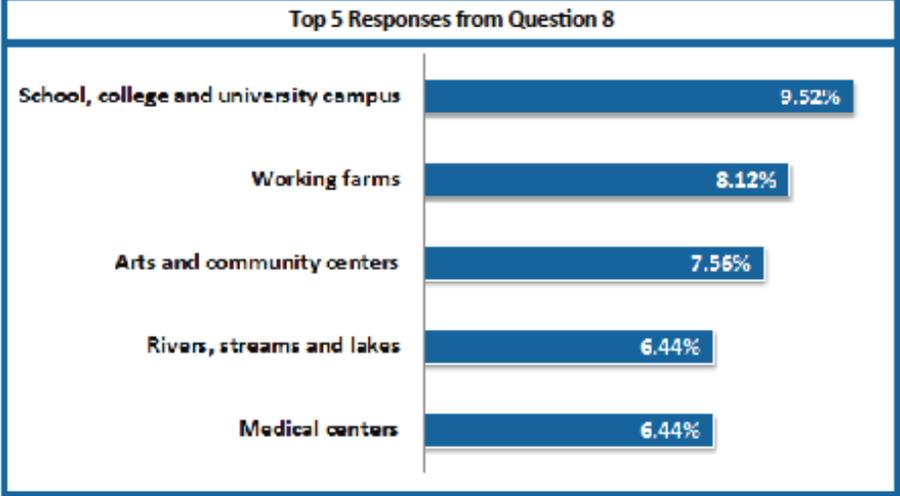
## FEATURES OF OUR REGION

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?



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



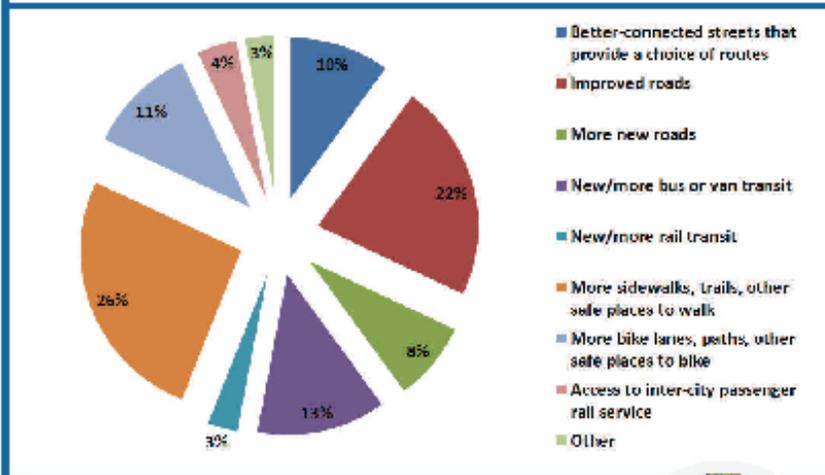
## TRANSPORTATION

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

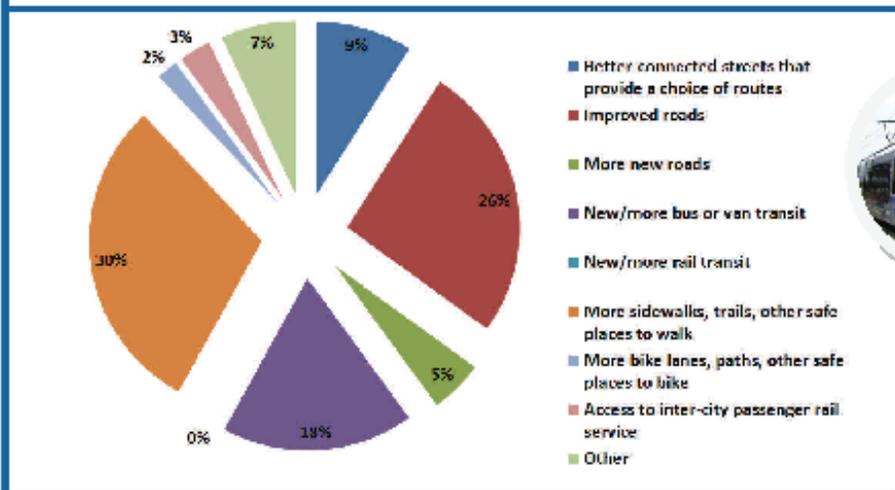
**Question 9:** When you think about the future transportation needs of your community, which 3 transportation features are the most important to you?

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](http://www.ConnectOurFuture.org)



Vibrant Communities – Robust Region

# ANSON COUNTY, NC

## SAMPLE HEADLINES FROM QUESTION 12

“Anson’s economy is booming – unemployment rate the lowest in years”

“100% of Anson county students graduate high school on grade level”  
“Say good-bye to gang violence”

“Anson county is the place to work and prosper”

“All Our Diverse Schools Blow End-of-Grade Tests Out of the Water!”

“Safe environment to raise youth”

## SAMPLE QUOTES FROM QUESTION 13

“We have the most wonderful people in the world here in Anson County”

“The school system”

“Anson County is very interested in growth and development without the loss of its small town character and being able to maintain a safe environment”

“We desperately need some sort of job creation”

“Our community could prosper with investment in recreation”

## CHALLENGES

**Question 11:** Please identify a few things you think pose the biggest challenge for you, your community or the future of our region.

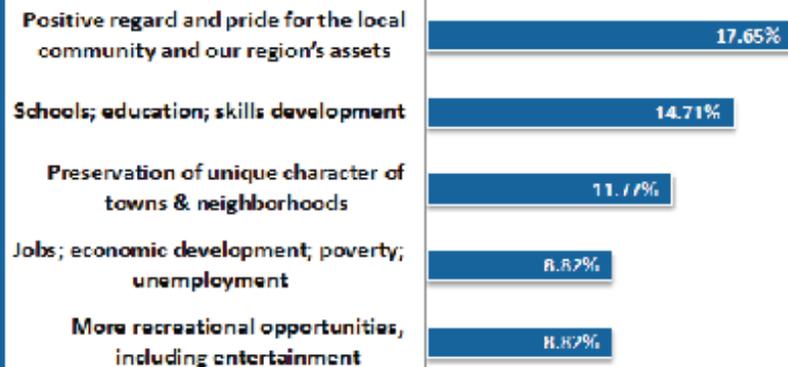
### Top 3 themes for Question 11



**Question 12:** Thinking about the biggest challenge that you identified above, fast forward 10 years or so. What would be the headline in your local newspaper if we had successfully met the challenge you mentioned?

**Question 13:** Is there anything else that is important about your community or our region that you want us to know?

### Top 5 themes for Question 13



Cabarrus County, NC



Vibrant Communities – Robust Region

CABARRUS 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

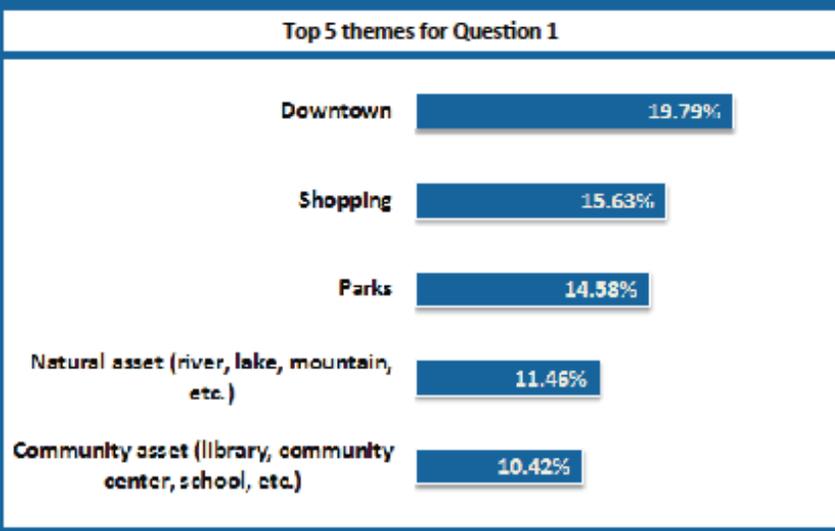
- "Downtown Concord"
- "Concord Mills"
- "Frank Liske Park"
- "Lake Norman area"
- "NC Research Campus"
- "The community has done a great job with the park in Kannapolis"
- "The idea of the Carolina Thread Trail as a green network tying the region together is one of the strongest ideas currently under implementation."

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?



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



Fun ... Beauty ... Friendly

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



Ease of access ... Family ... Safe ... Shopping

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



Safety ... Relaxing/calming

All responses are listed on the *CONNECT Our Future* website at [www.ConnectOurFuture.org](http://www.ConnectOurFuture.org)



Vibrant Communities – Robust Region

# CABARRUS COUNTY, NC

## WHERE DID WE TALK TO PEOPLE?

Open house on December 4, 2012 in Kannapolis at the Rowan Cabarrus Community College

Small group on October 11, 2013 with the Adult Cabarrus County Workforce Development Summit at Great Wolf Lodge Concord

Small group on January 22, 2013 with the Mt. Pleasant Lions Club at the Mt. Pleasant Town Hall

Small group on February 25, 2013 with the Concord Engineering Office Staff at Concord Engineering

Small group on February 25, 2013 with the Concord Engineering Field Staff at Concord Engineering

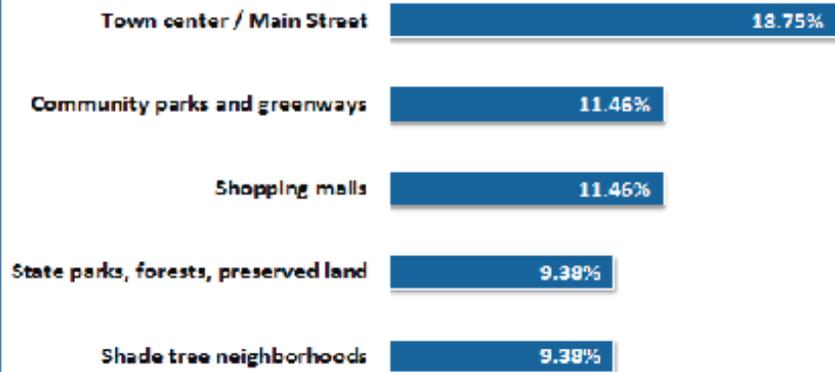
Youth small group on March 22, 2013 with the Cabarrus-Kannapolis Early College High School at the Rowan Cabarrus Community College

## FEATURES OF OUR REGION

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

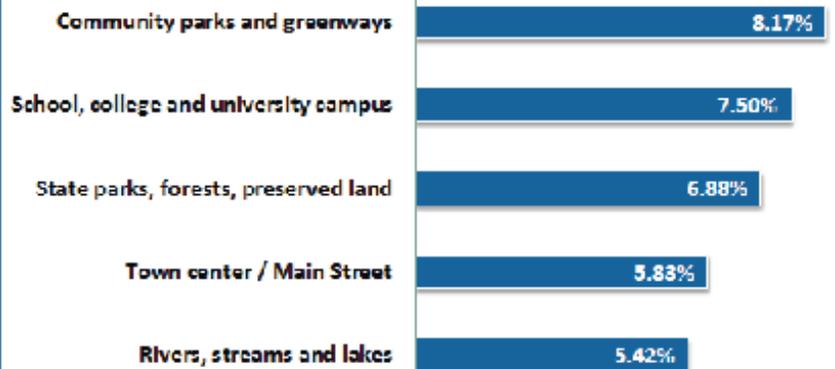
**Question 7:** What is the one feature that best represents the place you named in Question 1?

### 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



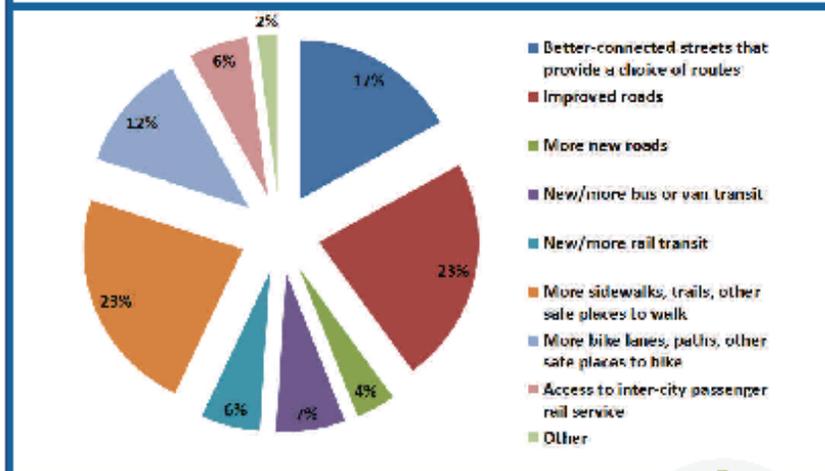
## TRANSPORTATION

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

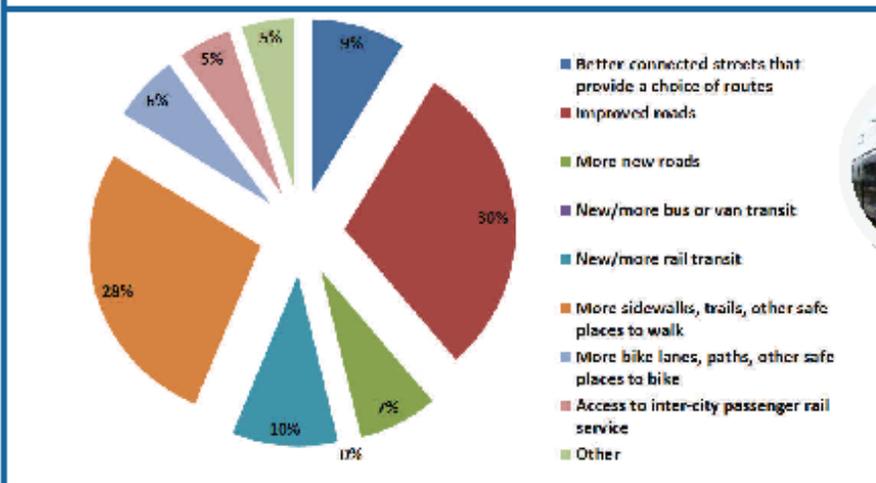
**Question 9:** When you think about the future transportation needs of your community, which 3 transportation features are the most important to you?

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](http://www.ConnectOurFuture.org)



Vibrant Communities – Robust Region

# CABARRUS COUNTY, NC

## SAMPLE HEADLINES FROM QUESTION 12

- "Litterbugs go extinct"
- "New manufacturing zone spurs growth of jobs in region"
- "Mt. Pleasant continues to grow in a controlled fashion"
- "Cabarrus County - unemployment down to its lowest level in 20+ years with a bursting economy"
- "Statesville finally gets bus transportation"
- "Community is booming"

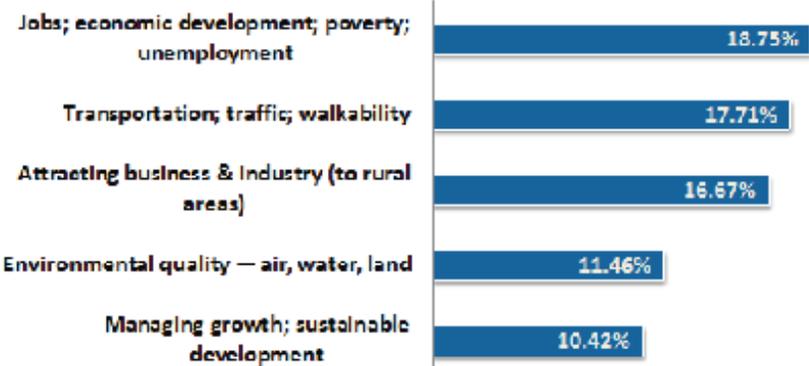
## SAMPLE QUOTES FROM QUESTION 13

- "Transportation is also an issue, no job, no funds, no way to get to work"
- "There needs to be more teen oriented events and place to go"
- "Location for new middle school should remain here in Mt. Pleasant"
- "We are living in one of the best areas of the US"
- "Future employment centers are vital"
- "We do not become a big city, small towns are fine"

## CHALLENGES

**Question 11:** Please identify a few things you think pose the biggest challenge for you, your community or the future of our region.

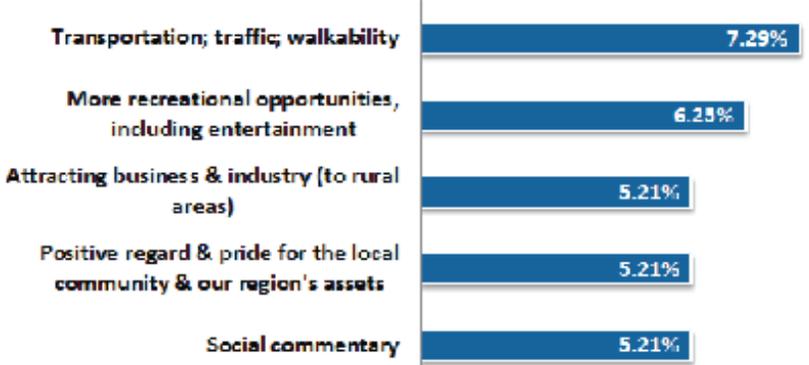
### Top 5 themes for Question 11



**Question 12:** Thinking about the biggest challenge that you identified above, fast forward 10 years or so. What would be the headline in your local newspaper if we had successfully met the challenge you mentioned?

**Question 13:** Is there anything else that is important about your community or our region that you want us to know?

### Top 5 themes for Question 13



Chester County, SC



Vibrant Communities – Robust Region

CHESTER COUNTY, SC

PHASE I RESULTS

WHAT IS *CONNECT Our Future*? THE BEST OF COMMUNITIES & THE REGION

*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

"Downtown Chester - historic"

"Chester State Park - Lansford"

"I appreciate the seclusion of our neighborhood. There are only five house with multiple acre lots"

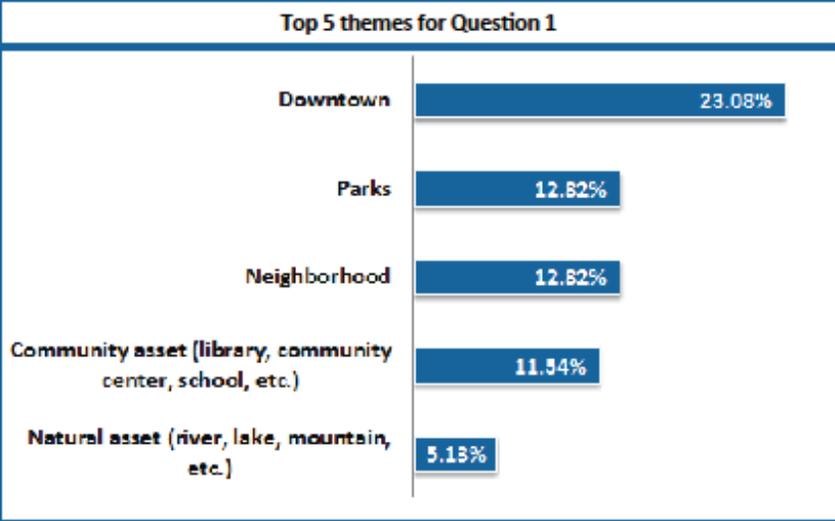
"The Chester Center of York Technical College"

"Lansford Canal"

*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?



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



Friendly ...  
Historic ...  
Relaxing & Calming

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



Family ... History ...  
Education

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



Civic Pride ... Safety ...  
Economic Growth

All responses are listed on the *CONNECT Our Future* website at [www.ConnectOurFuture.org](http://www.ConnectOurFuture.org)



Vibrant Communities – Robust Region

# CHESTER COUNTY, SC

**WHERE DID WE TALK TO PEOPLE?**

3 small group on October 29, 2012 with the Chester County Leadership Forum at the Wagon Wheel Restaurant

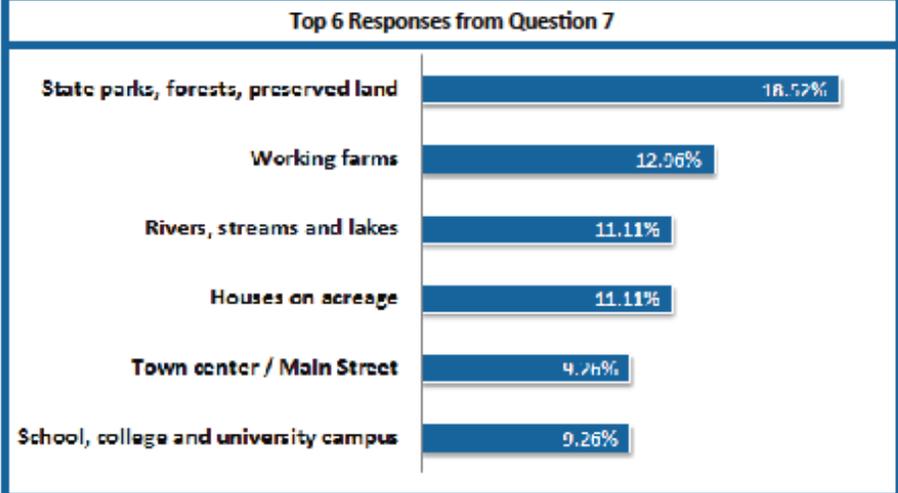
Open house on January 17, 2013 in Chester at the Chester County Government Complex

Open house on February 7, 2013 in Richburg at the Richburg Fire Station

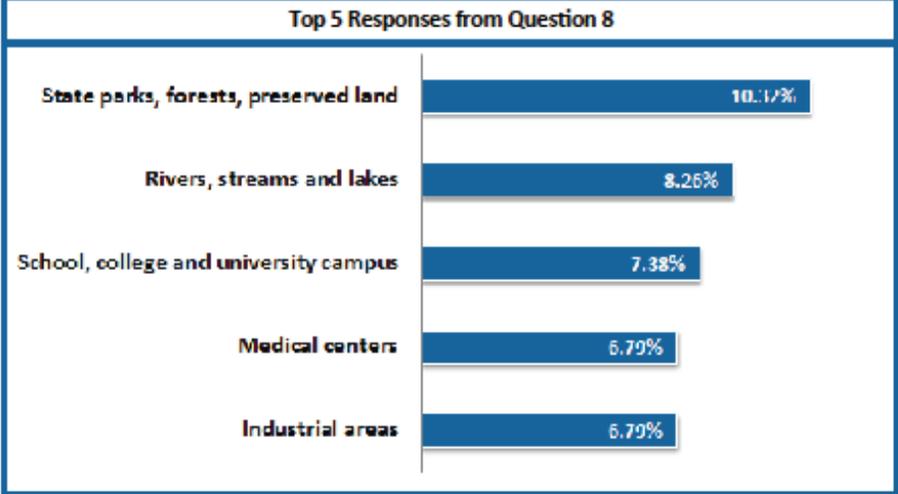
## FEATURES OF OUR REGION

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?



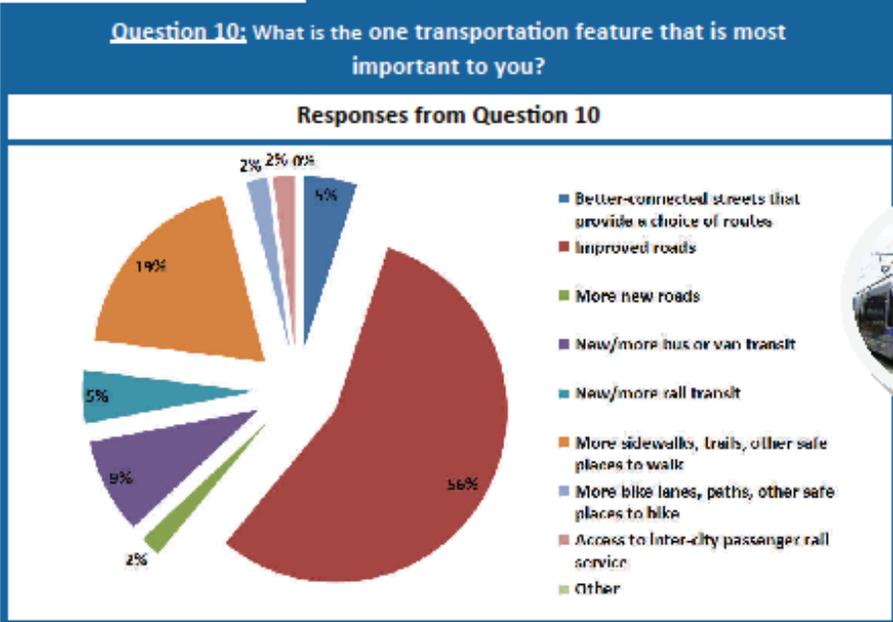
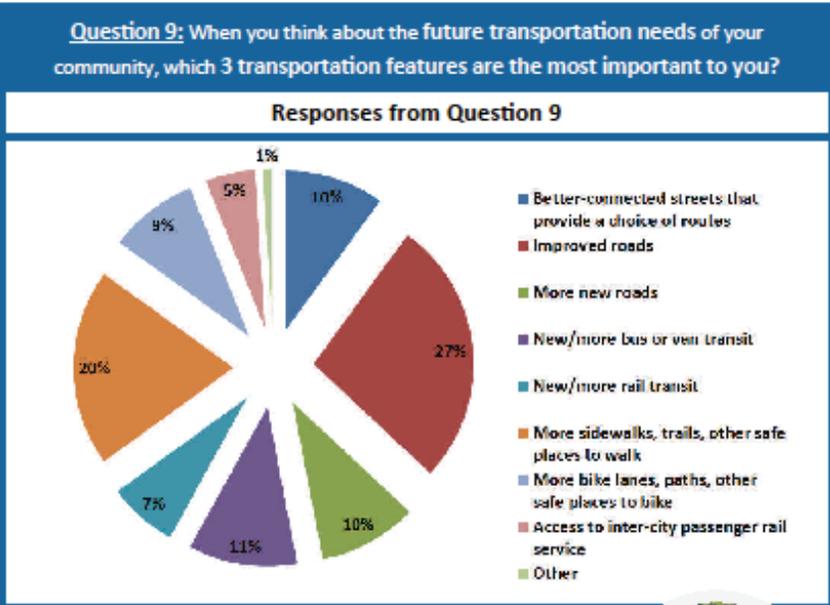
**Question 8:** What are the 5 features that you feel are most important for the future of your community and our region?



## 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



All responses are listed on the CONNECT Our Future website at [www.ConnectOurFuture.org](http://www.ConnectOurFuture.org)



Vibrant Communities – Robust Region

# CHESTER COUNTY, SC

## SAMPLE HEADLINES FROM QUESTION 12

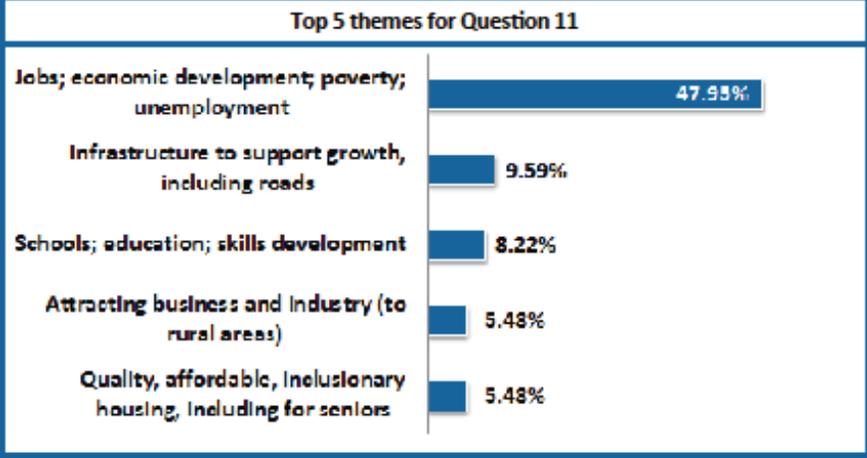
- “Chester Co now has lowest state unemployment”
- “Interstate development helps expand growth”
- “High school graduation rate at 95% in Chester County”
- “Chester County is growing, new opportunities for workers”
- “New housing in process—old folks flock to Chester”

## SAMPLE QUOTES FROM QUESTION 13

- “We have several nice parks and the beginning of a regional greenway system, may have historic tours and tourism potential”
- “Our local governments must begin to cooperate, the relationship between our county commissioner and our city is dysfunctional, the inability to work together prevents progress”
- “Needs to move forward and quit living in the past”
- “Exit 65 - the place to begin with growth”

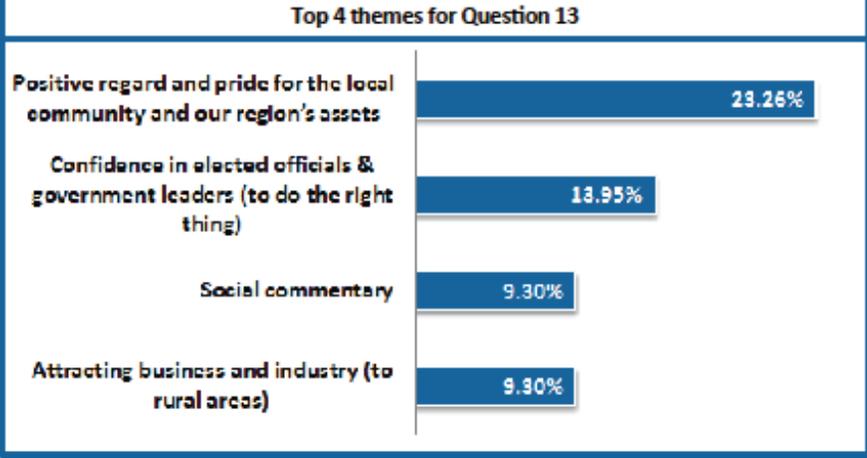
## CHALLENGES

**Question 11:** Please identify a few things you think pose the biggest challenge for you, your community or the future of our region.



**Question 12:** Thinking about the biggest challenge that you identified above, fast forward 10 years or so. What would be the headline in your local newspaper if we had successfully met the challenge you mentioned?

**Question 13:** Is there anything else that is important about your community or our region that you want us to know?



Cleveland County, NC



Vibrant Communities – Robust Region

CLEVELAND 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

"Uptown/downtown Shelby, the collaboration involved in making Ligand Center a reality"

"Community - service center, art center, museum, performing arts center, region - connectivity, arts and culture"

"The Broad River Greenway"

"South Mountain State Park"

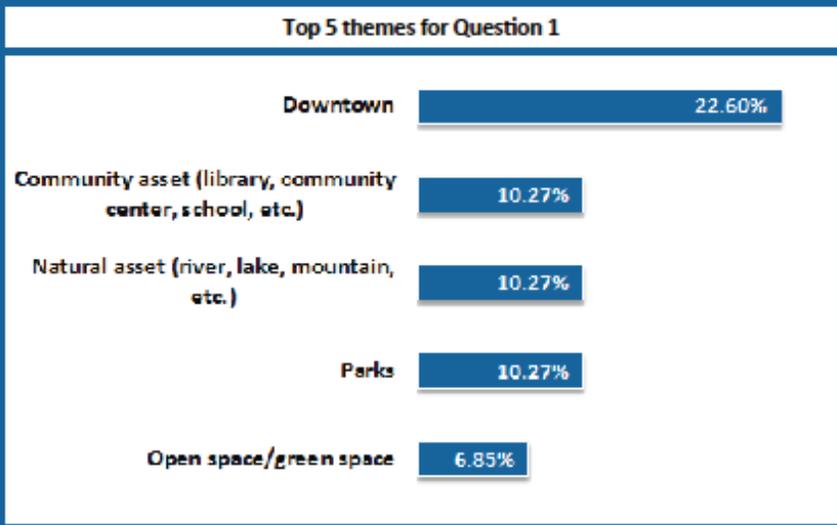
"Kings Mountain Gateway Trail"

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?



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?



Walkability ...  
Education ...  
Recreation

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



Connection ... Family  
... Home ... Safety

All responses are listed on the *CONNECT Our Future* website at [www.ConnectOurFuture.org](http://www.ConnectOurFuture.org)



Vibrant Communities – Robust Region

# CLEVELAND COUNTY, NC

## WHERE DID WE TALK TO PEOPLE?

Open house on January 17, 2013 in Kings Mountain at the H. Lawrence Patrick Senior Complex in Kings Mountain

Open house on January 22, 2013 in Shelby at the City Park Gymnasium in Shelby

Open house on January 24, 2013 in Lawndale at the Lawndale Community Center in Lawndale

Small group on February 13, 2013 with the Alliance For Health at the Cleveland Regional Medical Center

Small group on February 20, 2013 with Cornerstone Dentistry

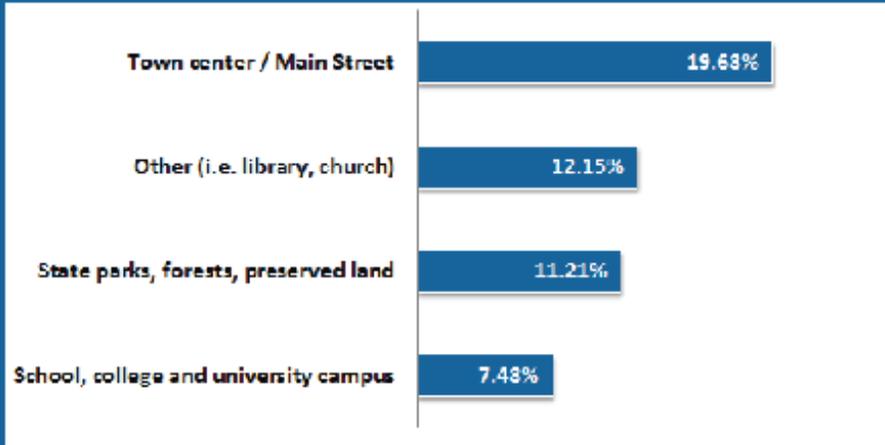
Small group on February 20, 2013 with the Cleveland County Arts Council

## FEATURES OF OUR REGION

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

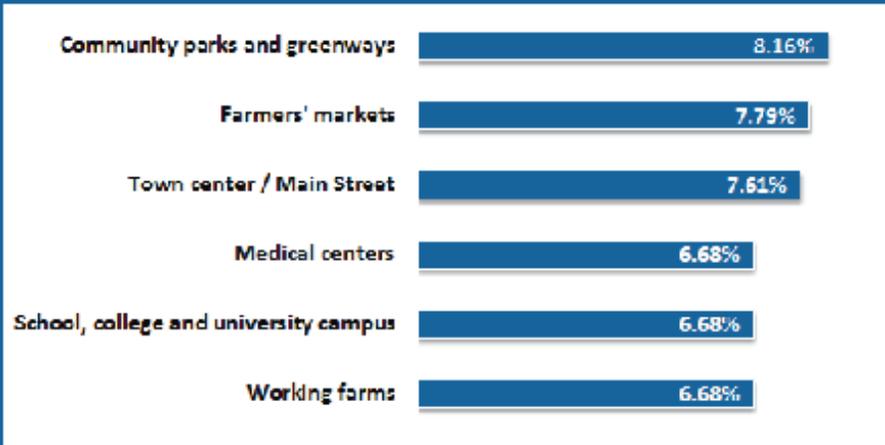
**Question 7:** What is the one feature that best represents the place you named in Question 1?

### Top 4 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 6 Responses from Question 8



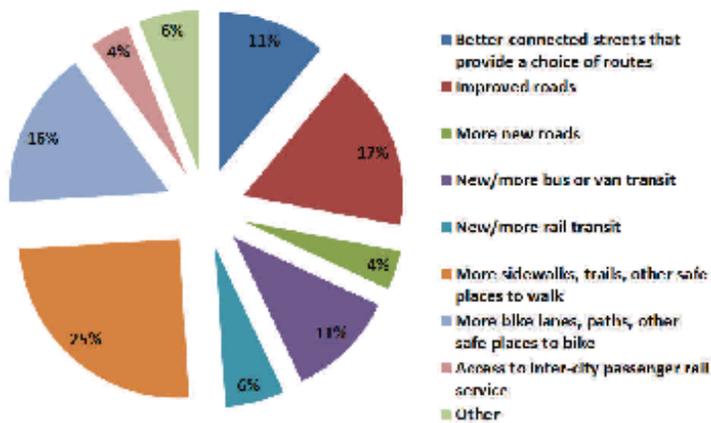
## TRANSPORTATION

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

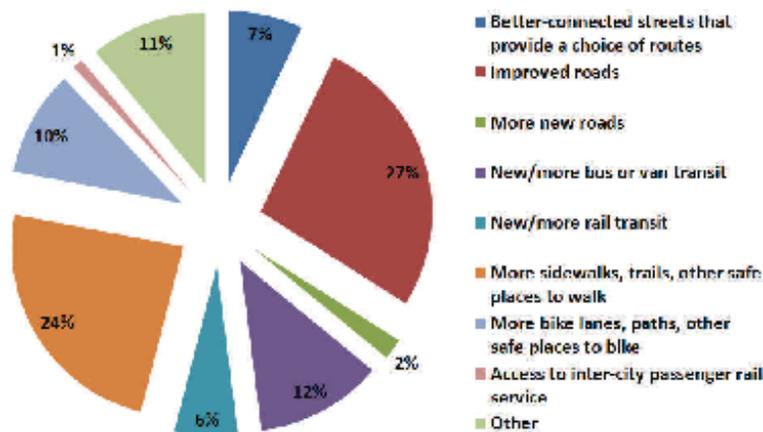
**Question 9:** When you think about the future transportation needs of your community, which 3 transportation features are the most important to you?

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](http://www.ConnectOurFuture.org)



Vibrant Communities – Robust Region

# CLEVELAND COUNTY, NC

## SAMPLE HEADLINES FROM QUESTION 12

"Unemployment rate less than 1%"

"All roads lead to health: new public transportation connects the dots"

"Cleveland Co. ranks #1 in NC schools for both elementary and high school"

"100% efficiency met, no need for improvement"

"Cleveland Co. reserves used to pay off national debt"

"Federal gov't agrees to return to the enumerated powers specified in the Constitution"

## SAMPLE QUOTES FROM QUESTION 13

"Kings Mtn. is a great place to live and raise your family"

"Our region is only a starting point. Our federal government is where the real problems start!"

"Need for social/recreational type, programs for teens - safe places for teens, mentoring type programs for teens"

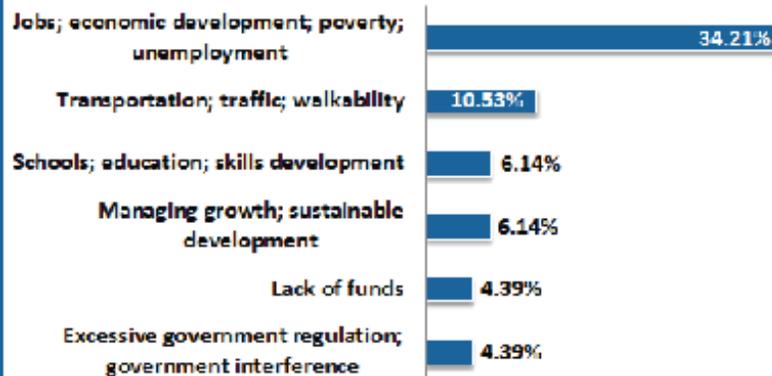
"We need a better mall and shopping centers because most people travel out of the county to spend their money at larger malls"

"Other issues we deal with are transportation"

## CHALLENGES

**Question 11:** Please identify a few things you think pose the biggest challenge for you, your community or the future of our region.

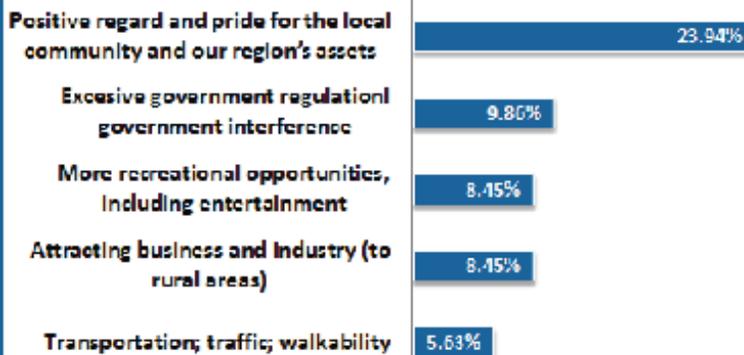
### Top 6 themes for Question 11



**Question 12:** Thinking about the biggest challenge that you identified above, fast forward 10 years or so. What would be the headline in your local newspaper if we had successfully met the challenge you mentioned?

**Question 13:** Is there anything else that is important about your community or our region that you want us to know?

### Top 5 themes for Question 13



Gaston County, NC



Vibrant Communities – Robust Region

GASTON COUNTY, NC

PHASE I RESULTS

WHAT IS CONNECT Our Future? THE BEST OF COMMUNITIES & THE REGION

**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"

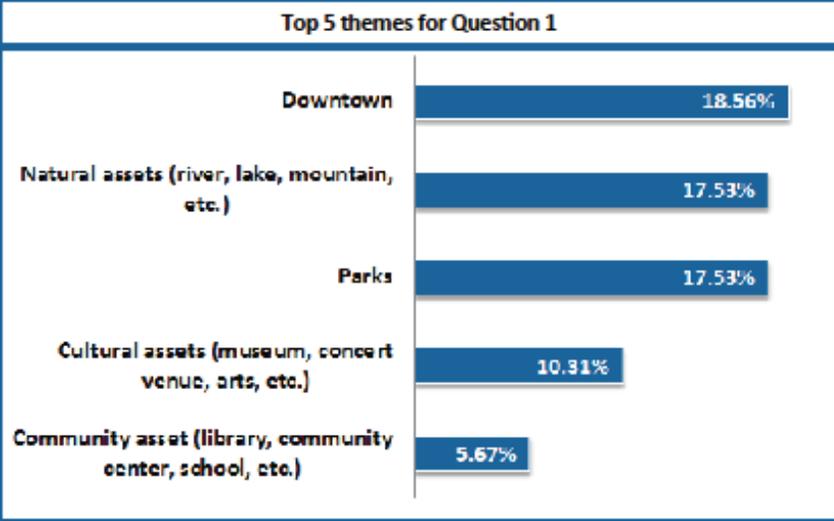
"Stowe Botanical Gardens, Schiele Museum, community concerts"

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

**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?



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](http://www.ConnectOurFuture.org)



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

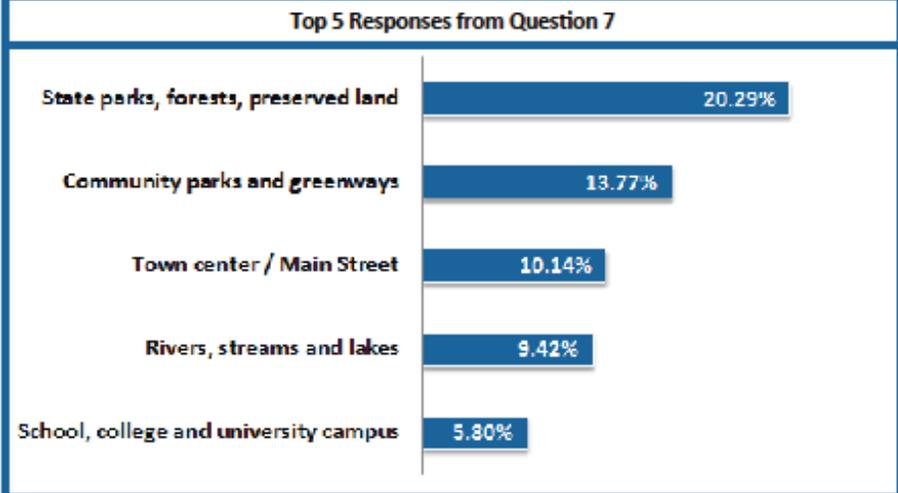
Open house on February 19, 2013 at the Mt. Holly Municipal Complex

4 small groups on February 27, 2013 at Gaston College

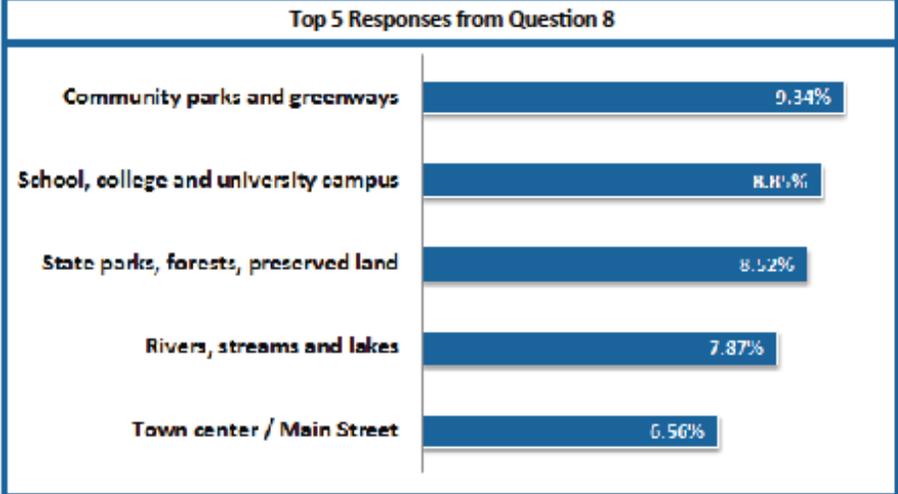
## FEATURES OF OUR REGION

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?**



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



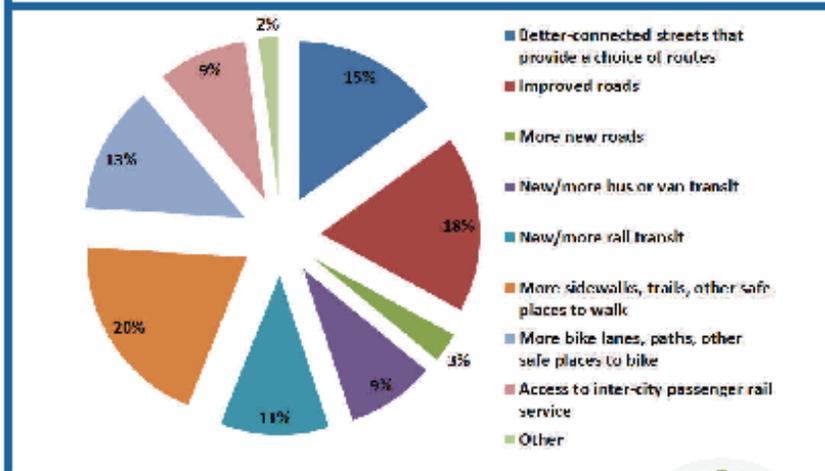
## TRANSPORTATION

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

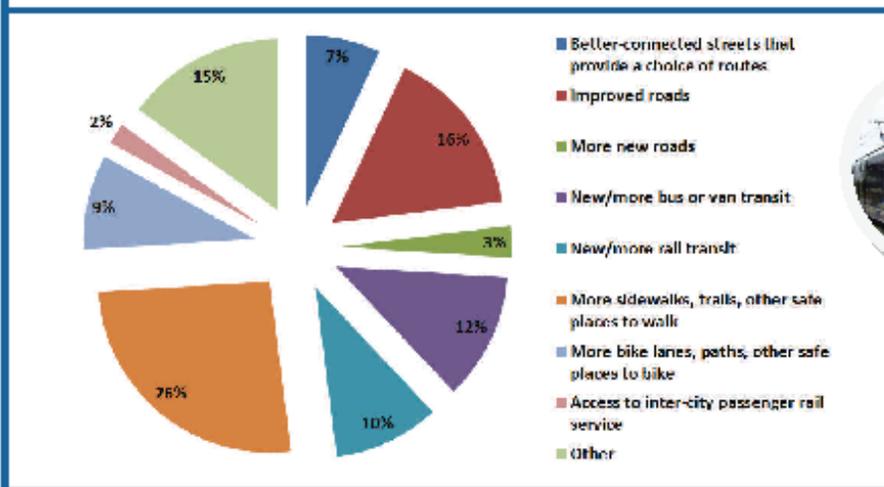
**Question 9:** When you think about the future transportation needs of your community, which 3 transportation features are the most important to you?

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](http://www.ConnectOurFuture.org)



Vibrant Communities – Robust Region

# GASTON COUNTY, NC

## SAMPLE HEADLINES FROM QUESTION 12

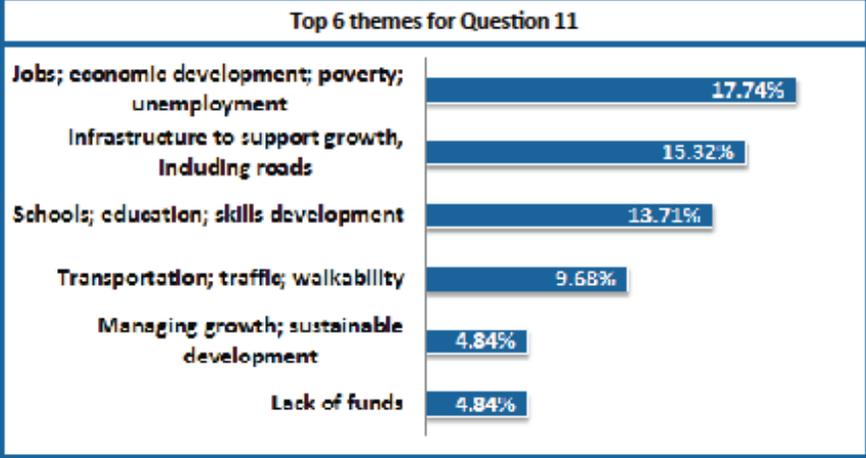
- "More jobs, less people living in bad conditions"
- "Another successful project completed for the people, by the people"
- "Gaston Co. graduates a record 98% of students"
- "Today you can get anywhere in the region without owning a car!"
- "Belmont sees record population growth"
- "American government balances budget, US economy soars, America #1 in the world"

## SAMPLE QUOTES FROM QUESTION 13

- "Keeping the typical Southern value intact"
- "Planned and coordinated growth is vital to controlled planning for future development"
- "We have tremendous natural, artistic and structural resources"
- "More industry is needed in Gaston County"
- "Access to outdoor activities for all ages"

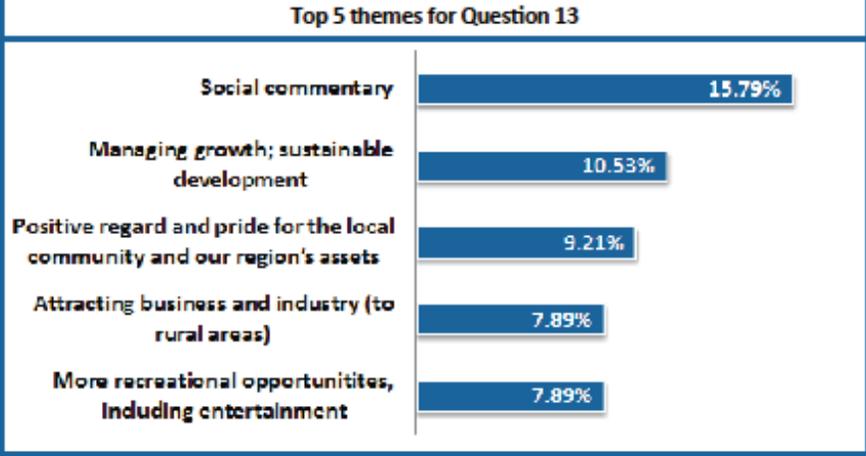
## CHALLENGES

**Question 11:** Please identify a few things you think pose the biggest challenge for you, your community or the future of our region.



**Question 12:** Thinking about the biggest challenge that you identified above, fast forward 10 years or so. What would be the headline in your local newspaper if we had successfully met the challenge you mentioned?

**Question 13:** Is there anything else that is important about your community or our region that you want us to know?



Iredell County, NC



Vibrant Communities – Robust Region

# IREDELL COUNTY, NC

PHASE I RESULTS

## WHAT IS CONNECT Our Future? THE BEST OF COMMUNITIES & THE REGION

**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

"The cityscape improvements downtown have really given the city a tremendous facelift, great job"

"Lake Norman area"

"The Statesville activity center, it provides an outlet and opportunity for all of Statesville's residents"

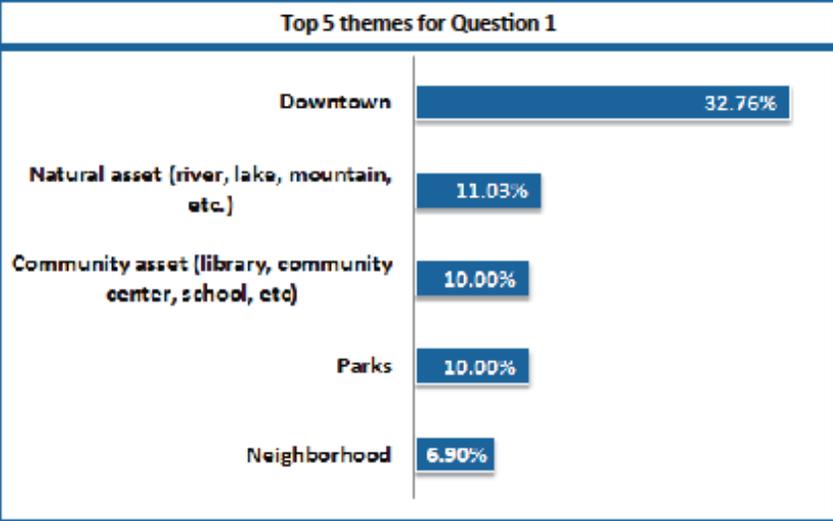
"Mac Anderson Park"

"East Broad Street neighborhood is where I live and I feel very safe and comfortable there"

**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?



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



Friendly ... Relaxing & Calming ... Historic

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



Accessibility ... Education ... Recreation

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



Family ... Home ... Safety

All responses are listed on the CONNECT Our Future website at [www.ConnectOurFuture.org](http://www.ConnectOurFuture.org)



Vibrant Communities – Robust Region

# IREDELL COUNTY, NC

**WHERE DID WE TALK TO PEOPLE?**

Small group on November 15, 2012 with the Iredell County Youth Council

Open house on January 15, 2013 at the Charles Mack Citizen Center in Mooresville

Open house on January 29, 2013 at the Statesville Civic Center in Statesville

Small group on February 27, 2013 with the Iredell-Statesville Community Enrichment Corporation

Small group on February 27, 2013 with Mitchell Community College

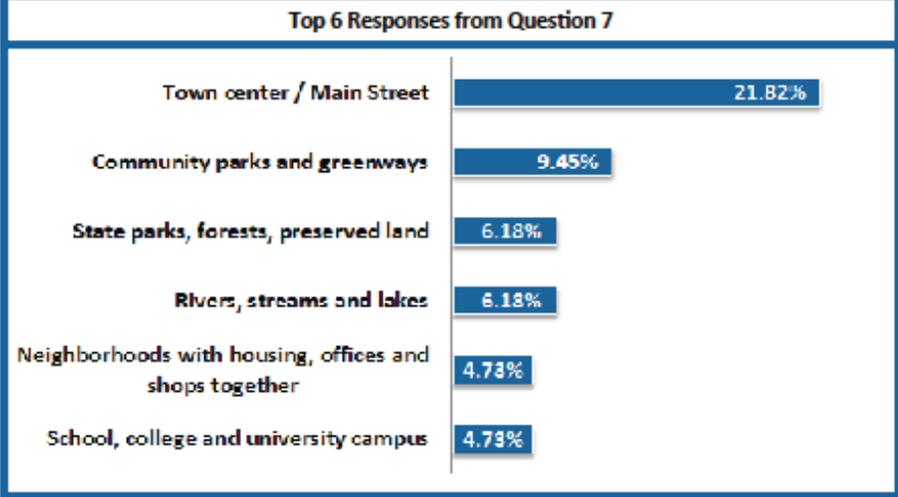
Small group on March 1, 2013 with the Mooresville Soup Kitchen

Youth small group on March 13, 2013 with Youth Leadership Statesville

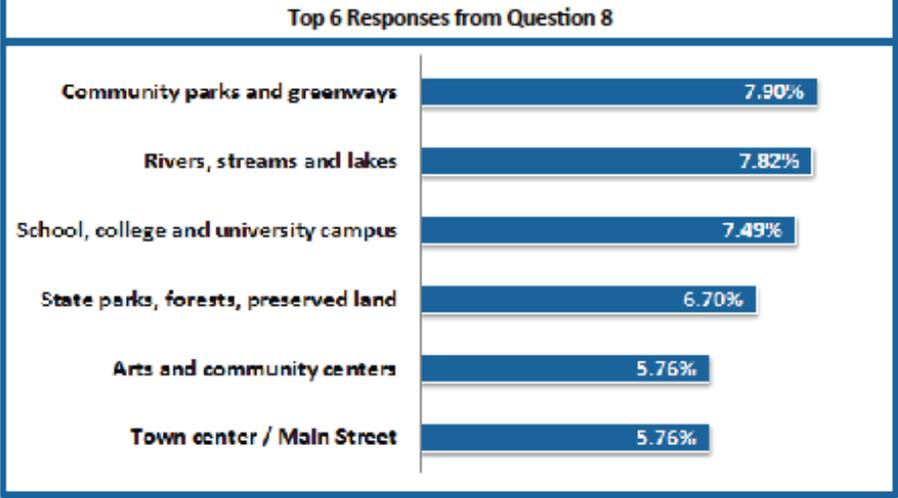
## FEATURES OF OUR REGION

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?



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



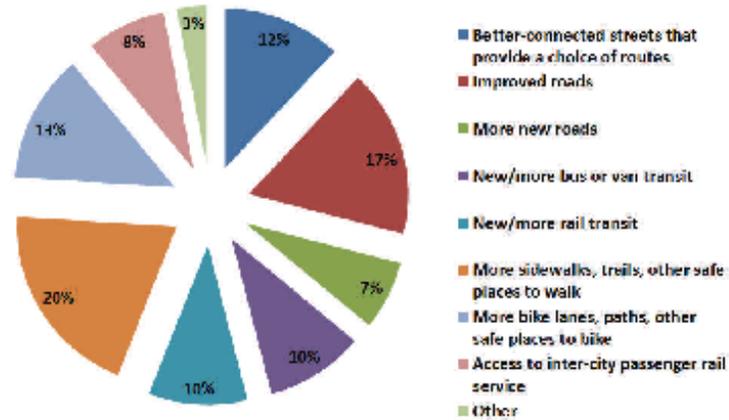
## TRANSPORTATION

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

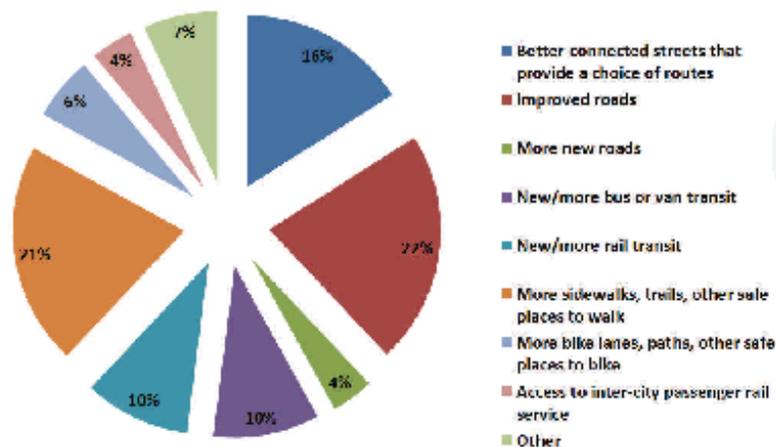
**Question 9:** When you think about the future transportation needs of your community, which 3 transportation features are the most important to you?

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](http://www.ConnectOurFuture.org)



Vibrant Communities – Robust Region

# IREDELL COUNTY, NC

## SAMPLE HEADLINES FROM QUESTION 12

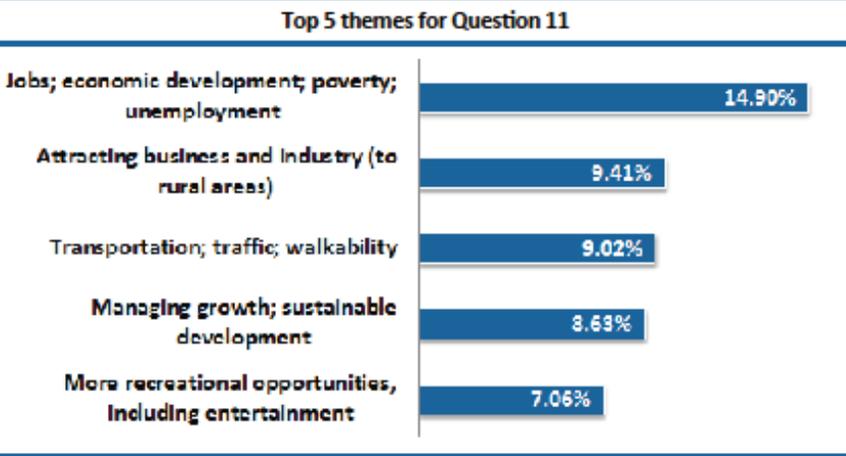
- “Iredell County has 0% unemployment and families are earning a living wage!”
- “Statesville: booming with life and industry”
- “77 has been widened to 6 lanes from Statesville to Charlottes due to the counties and cities working together to make it happen”
- “Come grow with us!”
- “Statesville’s teens have new fun filled attractions”

## SAMPLE QUOTES FROM QUESTION 13

- “Close the check cashing facility and prohibit any new ones opening”
- “Statesville is boring and makes me really not want to come back”
- “I like how it is a small town with no traffic and you know a lot of the people who live in Statesville”
- “Yes, keep the serenity & beauty while managing the right growth - growth for the betterment of our region that doesn’t just fit the ‘big money’”
- “We need to spend some money in our school system”

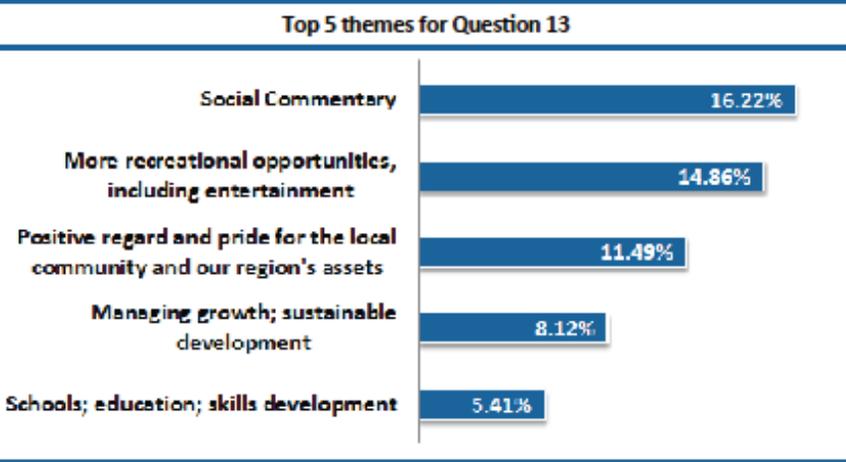
## CHALLENGES

**Question 11:** Please identify a few things you think pose the biggest challenge for you, your community or the future of our region.



**Question 12:** Thinking about the biggest challenge that you identified above, fast forward 10 years or so. What would be the headline in your local newspaper if we had successfully met the challenge you mentioned?

**Question 13:** Is there anything else that is important about your community or our region that you want us to know?



Lancaster County, SC



Vibrant Communities – Robust Region

# LANCASTER COUNTY, SC

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

“Historic Downtown Lancaster Area”

“Forest Hills neighborhood in the city of Lancaster”

“Andrew Jackson State Park is a place I have enjoyed since childhood - it represents history”

“Lancaster Senior Center”

“Lansford Canal - ecotourism opportunities”

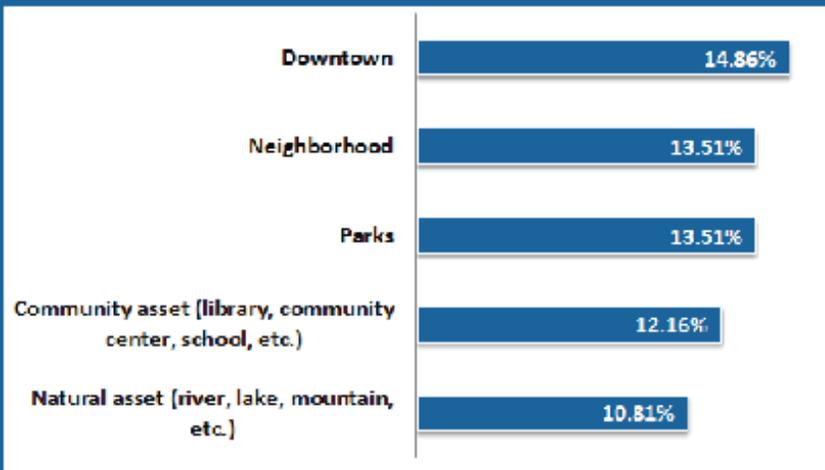
## THE BEST OF COMMUNITIES & THE REGION

*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 ...  
Small Town

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



People ... Home ...  
Open space &  
Green space

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



Safety ... Family

All responses are listed on the *CONNECT Our Future* website at [www.ConnectOurFuture.org](http://www.ConnectOurFuture.org)

1



Vibrant Communities – Robust Region

# LANCASTER COUNTY, SC

## WHERE DID WE TALK TO PEOPLE?

2 small groups on February 8, 2013 with the Lancaster Senior Center

Small group on February 24, 2013 with the Friends of Andrew Jackson State Park

Open house on February 4, 2013 at the Lancaster County Administration Building in Lancaster

Open house on February 5, 2013 at the Fort Mill Library in Baxter

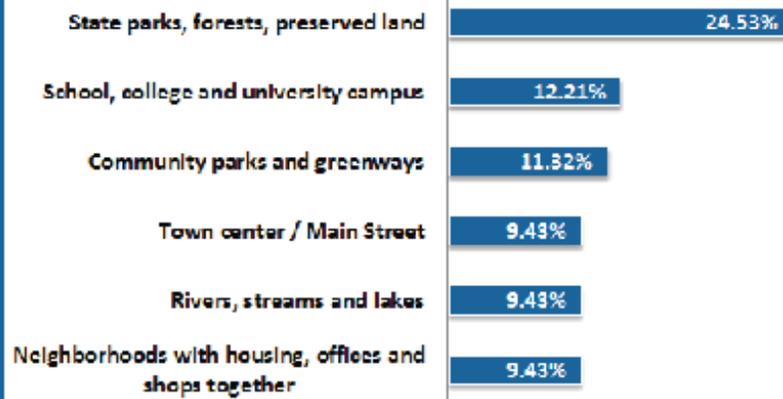
Open house on February 12, 2013 at Pleasant Hill UMC in Indian Land

## FEATURES OF OUR REGION

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

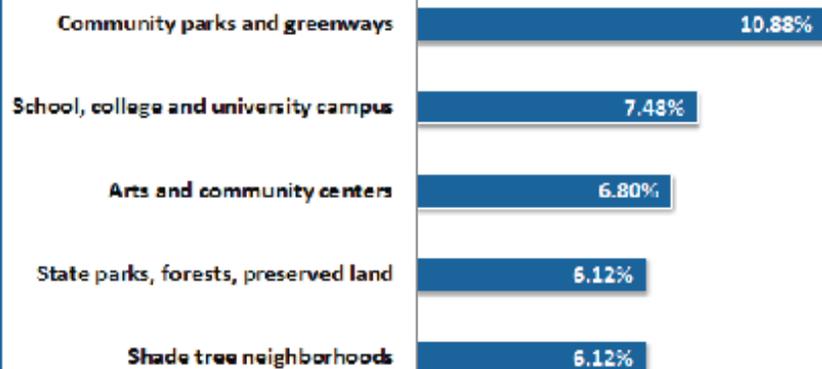
Question 7: What is the one feature that best represents the place you named in Question 1?

### Top 6 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



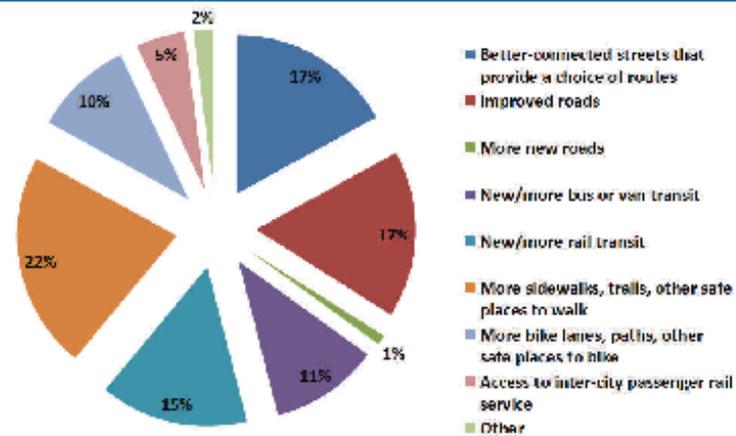
## TRANSPORTATION

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

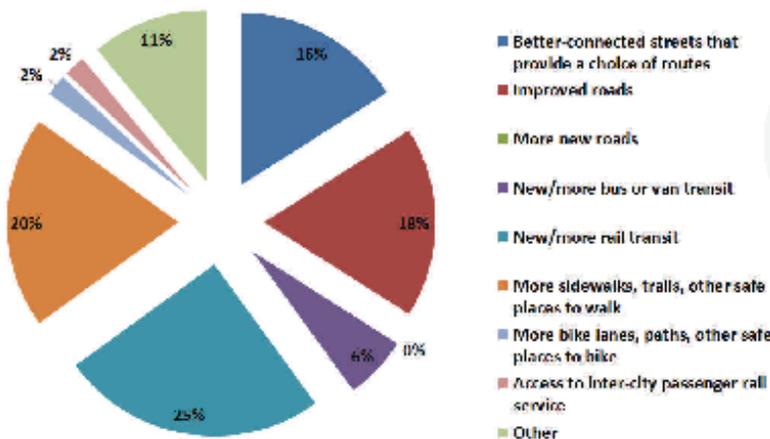
**Question 9:** When you think about the future transportation needs of your community, which 3 transportation features are the most important to you?

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](http://www.ConnectOurFuture.org)



Vibrant Communities – Robust Region

# LANCASTER COUNTY, SC

## SAMPLE HEADLINES FROM QUESTION 12

- "Indian Land developed with planned growth"
- "Lancaster County #1 Small City to Live In U.S. (the first time an area has gone from being worse in the nation to first)"
- "Lancaster continues GROWTH!"
- "No traffic jams in Lancaster Co."
- "Region unveils new network of coordinated roads, paths and greenways that preserve our waterways and cultural heritage"

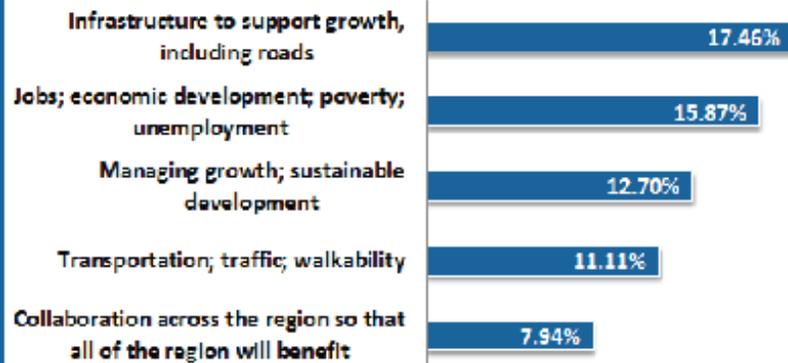
## SAMPLE QUOTES FROM QUESTION 13

- "Several large private foundations and many non profits have formed coalitions to address many of the community issues which are impacted by the lack of social safety nets"
- "Could there be another commuting route made to Rock Hill through York for Lake Wylie/Clover residents?"
- "I love living here in Lancaster"
- "There seems to be a need for greater cooperation among municipalities, we need to step out of our own comfort zone and realize that the future depends on what we are willing to do together"

## CHALLENGES

**Question 11:** Please identify a few things you think pose the biggest challenge for you, your community or the future of our region.

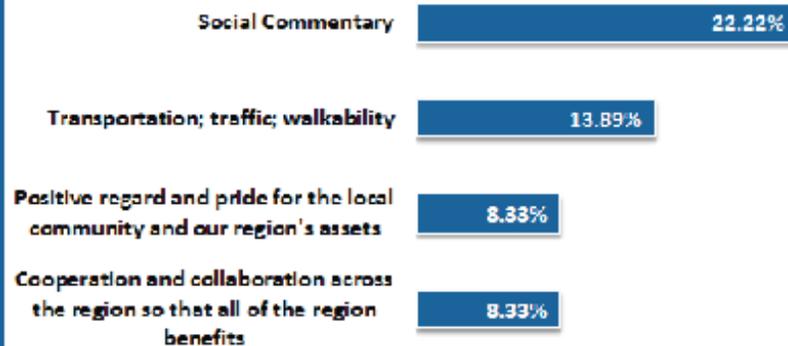
### Top 5 themes for Question 11



**Question 12:** Thinking about the biggest challenge that you identified above, fast forward 10 years or so. What would be the headline in your local newspaper if we had successfully met the challenge you mentioned?

**Question 13:** Is there anything else that is important about your community or our region that you want us to know?

### Top 4 themes for Question 13



Lincoln County, NC



Vibrant Communities – Robust Region

LINCOLN 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

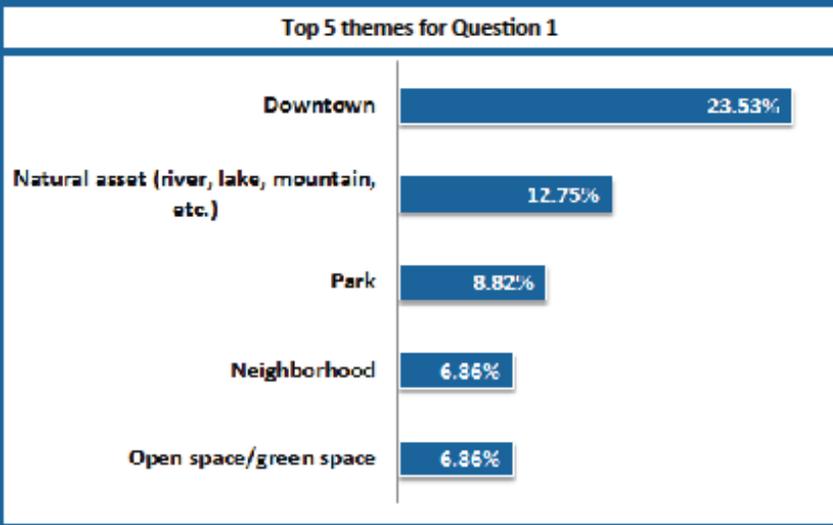
**Phase III:** Growth option selection based on the outcomes citizens of our region want for the future

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?



SAMPLE QUOTES FROM QUESTION 1

"Downtown Lincolnton, it is a beautiful place to live, work and play"

"Lake Norman Park, Carolina Thread Trail, good weather"

"Beatty's Ford Park"

"Friendly neighborhood, nice people, rural feel, not busy city, quick access to shops and big city"

"Geography - hills, rolling landscape, lake scenes"

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



Walkable ... Friendly ... Beautiful ... Small Town Feel

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



Convenience... Openness ... Rivers, lakes, mountains

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



Connection ... Home ... Safety ... Family

All responses are listed on the CONNECT Our Future website at [www.ConnectOurFuture.org](http://www.ConnectOurFuture.org)



Vibrant Communities – Robust Region

# LINCOLN COUNTY, NC

## WHERE DID WE TALK TO PEOPLE?

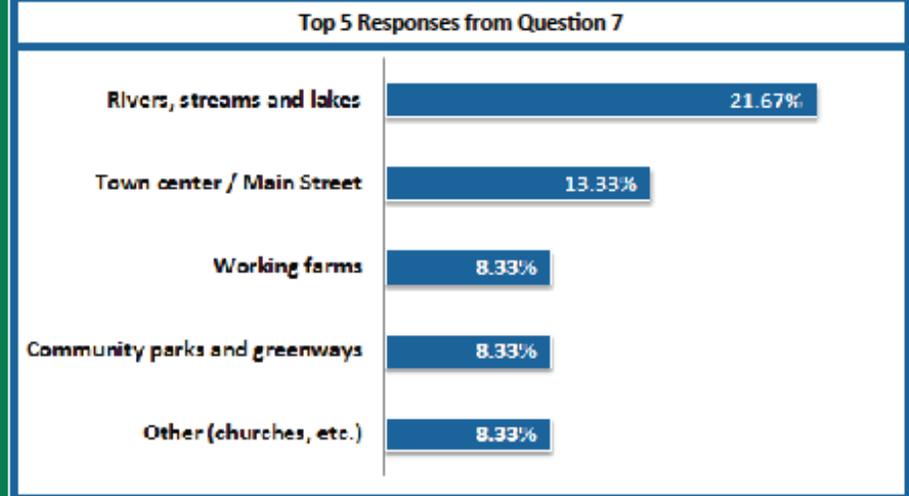
Open house on January 28, 2013 in Lincolnton at the Lincoln County Senior Center / Lincoln Campus Gaston College

2 small groups on February 7, 2013 with the East Lincoln Betterment Association at Unity Presbyterian Church

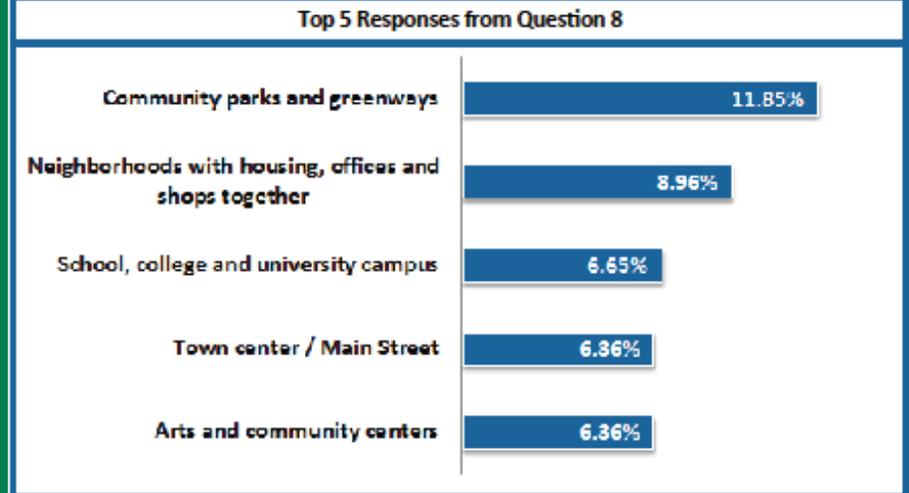
## FEATURES OF OUR REGION

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?



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



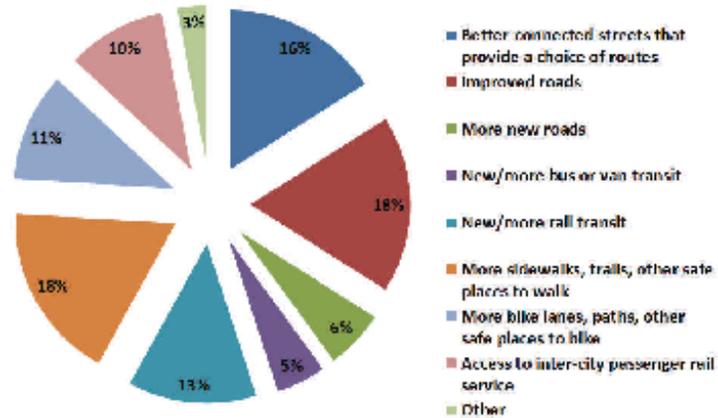
## TRANSPORTATION

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

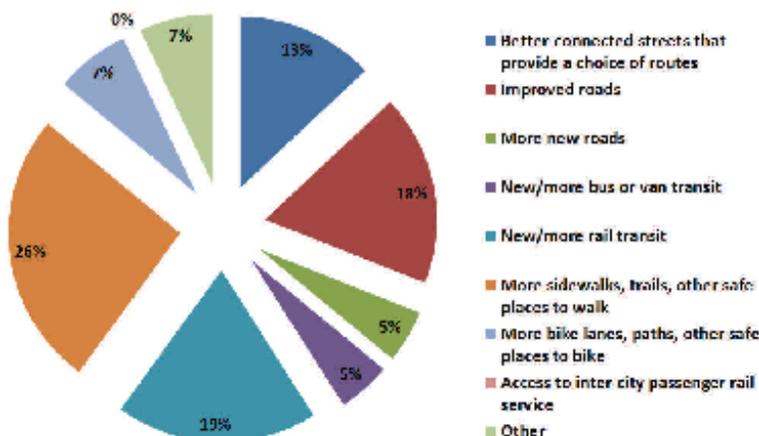
**Question 9:** When you think about the future transportation needs of your community, which 3 transportation features are the most important to you?

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](http://www.ConnectOurFuture.org)



Vibrant Communities – Robust Region

# LINCOLN COUNTY, NC

## SAMPLE HEADLINES FROM QUESTION 12

"Unemployment rate drops drastically in Lincoln Co."

"Light rail ridership greatly exceeds projected numbers and is a smashing success"

"Workforce readiness program in high school ranks high in success"

"Our 10 year incentive plan was successful and airport business park and industrial park are full, we are finishing the last of our trails that connect to surrounding counties and our small area plans and district plans are complete"

"Economy grows 50% in Lincoln Co."

## SAMPLE QUOTES FROM QUESTION 13

"I want Lincolnton to be a Christian based community, I want better government"

"Very special place with great sports teams and housing and jobs options"

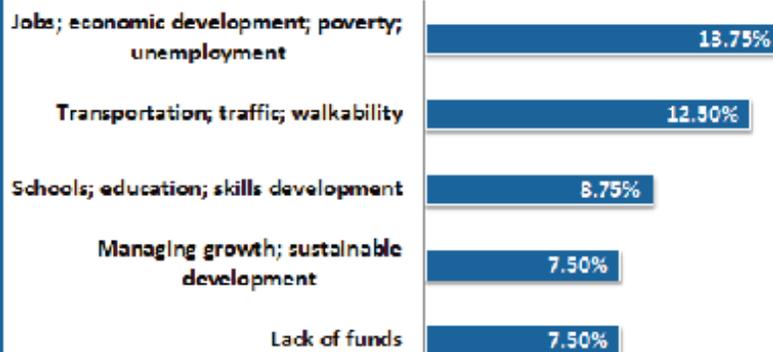
"Dog parks, large ball fields for kids"

"We want managed, reasonable growth at a pace that does not outstrip the county's financial ability to build schools and infrastructure"

## CHALLENGES

**Question 11:** Please identify a few things you think pose the biggest challenge for you, your community or the future of our region.

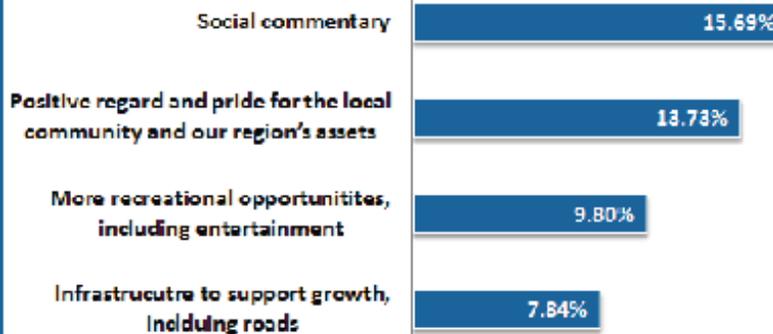
### Top 5 themes for Question 11



**Question 12:** Thinking about the biggest challenge that you identified above, fast forward 10 years or so. What would be the headline in your local newspaper if we had successfully met the challenge you mentioned?

**Question 13:** Is there anything else that is important about your community or our region that you want us to know?

### Top 4 themes for Question 13



Mecklenburg County, NC



Vibrant Communities – Robust Region

MECKLENBURG 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

"I love the charlotte uptown area, it provides a great place to just hang out, its very clean and safe and has plenty of things to do and enjoy"

"Chantilly neighborhood to walk to amenities between two great neighborhood, accessibility, the diversity of type people"

"Freedom Park - it has amenities for all people"

"The library because everyone hangs out there and you meet new people"

"Latta Plantation Nature Preserve"

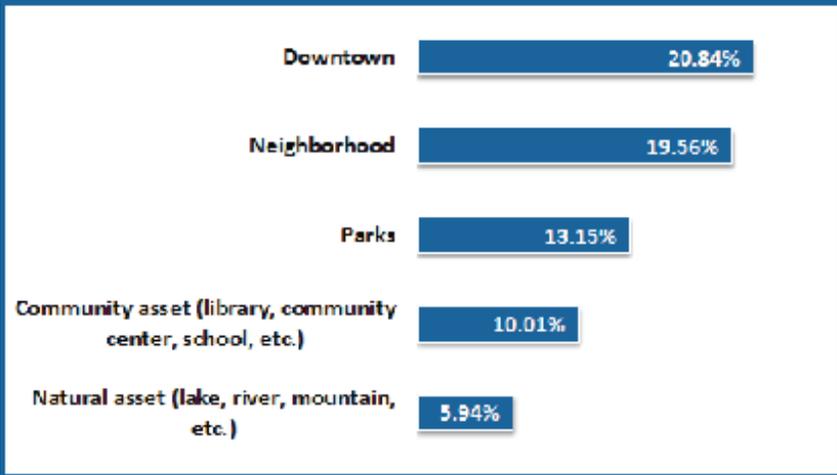
THE BEST OF COMMUNITIES & THE REGION

*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?



Clean ... Walkable ... Beautiful

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



Open space & Green space ... Natural assets ... Walkability

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



Home ... Safety ... Family

All responses are listed on the *CONNECT Our Future* website at [www.ConnectOurFuture.org](http://www.ConnectOurFuture.org)



Vibrant Communities – Robust Region

# MECKLENBURG COUNTY, NC

## WHERE DID WE TALK TO PEOPLE?

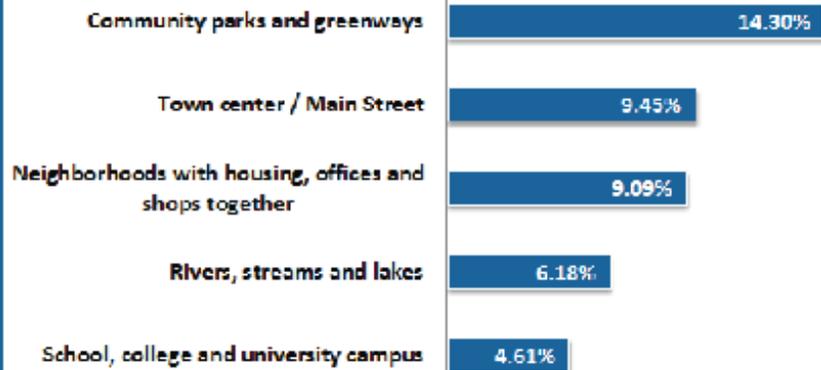
- September 13, 2012 with the American Leadership Forum Senior Fellows
- December 5, 2012 at Urban League
- December 5, 2012 at Friendship Baptist Church
- December 8, 2012 with the NW Corridor Stakeholders
- December 11, 2012 at Jacob's Ladder
- December 13, 2012 with the Aging Providers at the Levine Senior Center
- December 18, 2012 at the Duke Mansion
- December 20, 2012 with the IPA2 Attendees at the Government Center
- January 10, 2013 with CLAY at Goodwill Industries
- January 17, 2013 with the Centralina Economic Development Commission at Centralina COG
- January 23, 2013 with the Air Quality Workgroup at Centralina COG
- January 29, 2013 with the Charlotte Chamber of Commerce
- February 1, 2013 with Studio 345 at Spirit Square
- February 6, 2013 at the Bilingual Facilitator Training
- February 6, 2013 at the Bojangles Coliseum in Charlotte
- February 7, 2013 at UNCC
- February 7, 2013 at the Huntersville Town Hall in Huntersville
- February 8, 2013 with GCAA
- February 11, 2013 at the East Stonewall AME Zion Church in Charlotte
- February 12, 2013 at the Crossway Community Church in Charlotte
- February 16, 2013 with the UNCC MPA Students at UNCC
- February 16, 2013 with Youth Davidson
- February 18, 2013 at the Matthews Town Hall in Matthews
- February 20, 2013 at the Wells Fargo Atrium in Charlotte
- February 21, 2013 at the Sharon Presbyterian Church in Charlotte
- February 26, 2013 with the Charlotte Regional Commercial Retors at Midtown Centre
- February 28, 2013 with the Mint Hill Chamber

## FEATURES OF OUR REGION

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

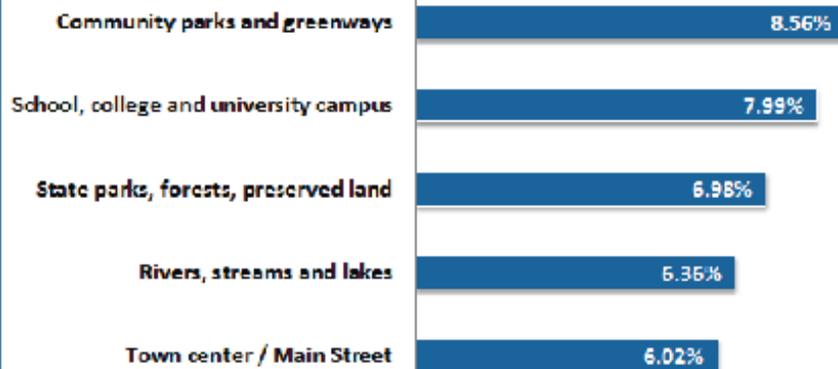
### Question 7: What is the one feature that best represents the place you named in Question 1?

#### Top 5 Responses from Question 7



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

#### Top 5 Responses from Question 8



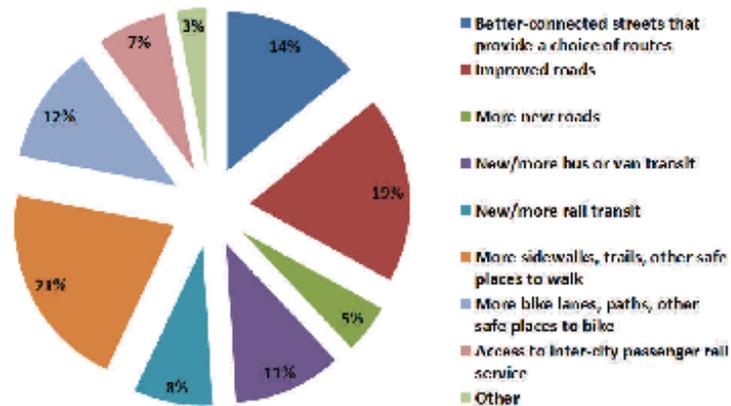
## TRANSPORTATION

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

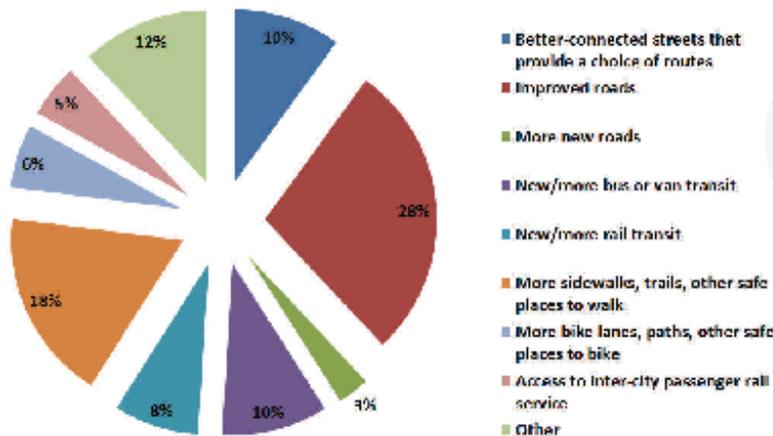
**Question 9:** When you think about the future transportation needs of your community, which 3 transportation features are the most important to you?

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](http://www.ConnectOurFuture.org)



Vibrant Communities – Robust Region

# MECKLENBURG COUNTY, NC

## SAMPLE HEADLINES FROM QUESTION 12

- "Traffic flowing well on all lands of I-85, 77 and 485"
- "Quality of life remains the same even with rapid growth"
- "The Charlotte area has increased in jobs by 90% in the last 10 years"
- "Students grades have improved, importance of education has sky rocketed, students are attending college and staying out of jail"
- "New mass transit regionally, roads that work for all uses, controlled growth that contains sprawl, planning that preserves farms & forests and green spaces, green buildings, clean water"

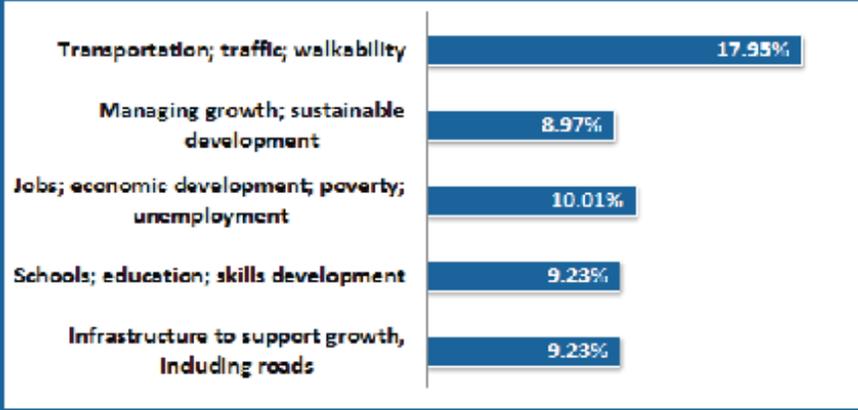
## SAMPLE QUOTES FROM QUESTION 13

- "I really enjoy the diversity here in charlotte, there are so many different cultures here to experience"
- "Communication is essential for life around others"
- "I hope that public transit expands in the region so we can give up our cars and still live our lives"
- "I feel we need to make better strides towards green"
- "Having viable entertainment options is important to attracting and retaining young, top talent"
- "Please incorporate sidewalks, so incredibly important to society!"

## CHALLENGES

**Question 11:** Please identify a few things you think pose the biggest challenge for you, your community or the future of our region.

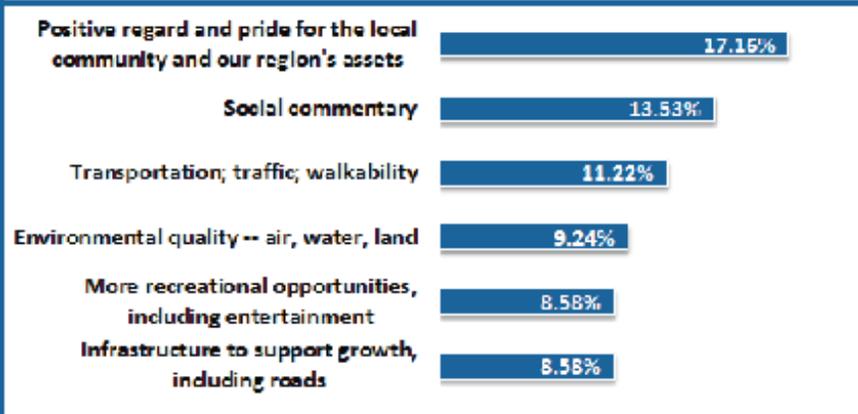
### Top 5 themes for Question 11



**Question 12:** Thinking about the biggest challenge that you identified above, fast forward 10 years or so. What would be the headline in your local newspaper if we had successfully met the challenge you mentioned?

**Question 13:** Is there anything else that is important about your community or our region that you want us to know?

### Top 6 themes for Question 13



Rowan County, NC



Vibrant Communities – Robust Region

ROWAN COUNTY, NC

PHASE I RESULTS

WHAT IS CONNECT Our Future? THE BEST OF COMMUNITIES & THE REGION

**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

"Downtown Salisbury—business and residential areas both"

"I really love Dan Nicholas Park, because it SO cute!"

"Koco Java and other family owned businesses in Salisbury area, rural country life"

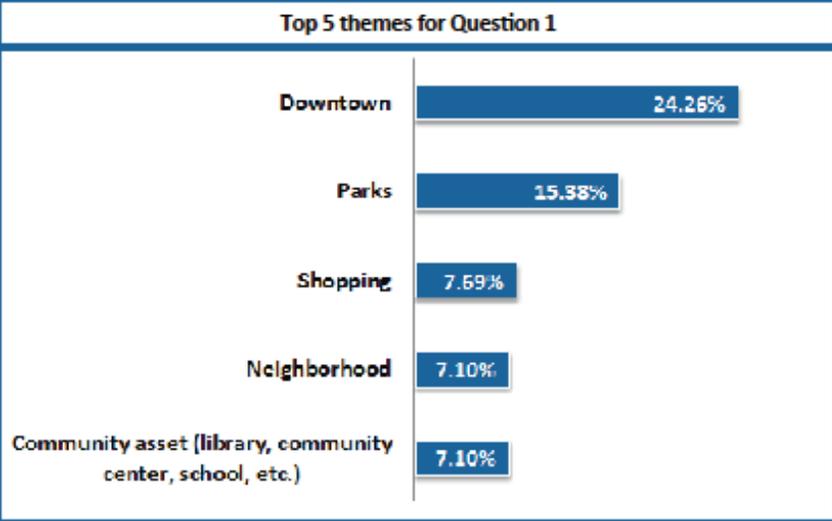
"Neighborhood - still with organized activities, city's activities, fundamentally cares about its children"

"Agri-civic Center—the center highlights the importance of our agricultural heritage & supports our local farmers/ independent growers"

**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?



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



Friendly ... Historic ... Beautiful ... Relaxing & Calming

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



Education ... Connection ... Home

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



Family ... Safety

All responses are listed on the CONNECT Our Future website at [www.ConnectOurFuture.org](http://www.ConnectOurFuture.org)



Vibrant Communities – Robust Region

# ROWAN COUNTY, NC

**WHERE DID WE TALK TO PEOPLE?**

Open house on November 27th, 2012 at the Salisbury Civic Center in Salisbury

Small group on December 6, 2012 with Rowan Helping Ministries

Small group on January 23, 2013 with Rowan Department of Social Services

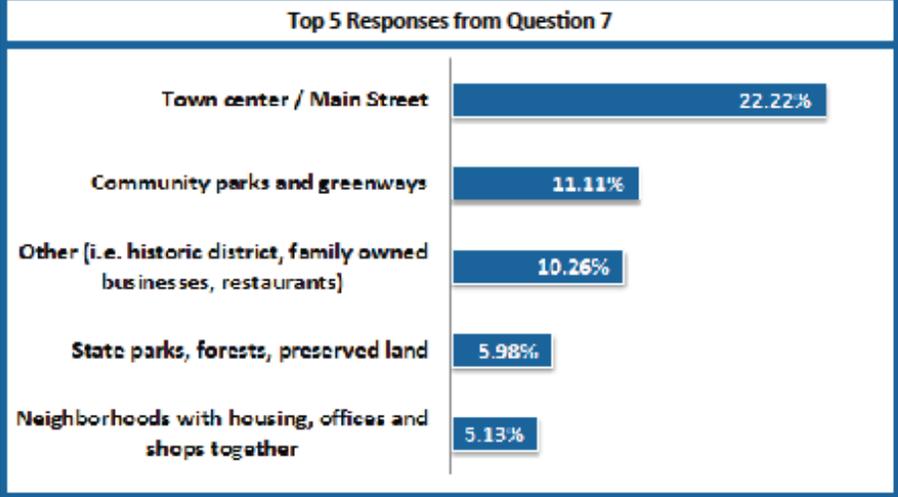
Small group on January 24, 2013 at the Rowan County Municipal Meeting at the Trinity Oaks—Lutheran Home

Youth small group on March 14, 2013 with the Salisbury-Rowan Community Action Agency

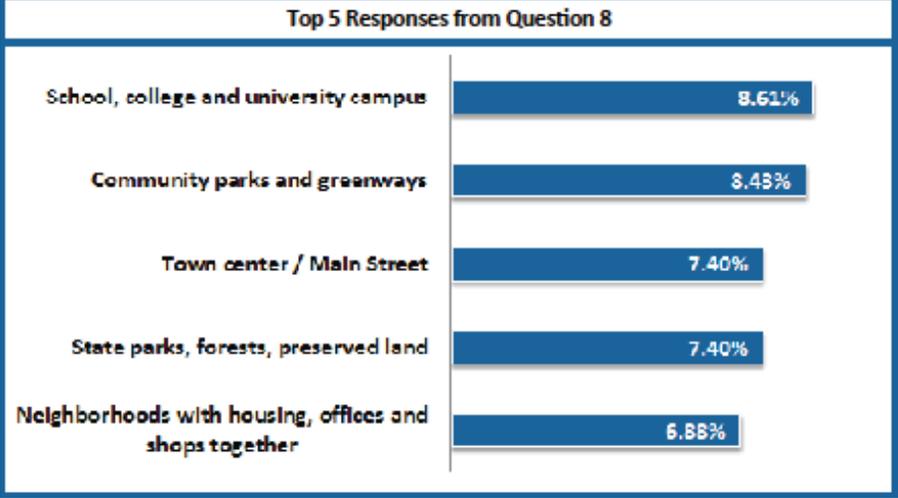
## FEATURES OF OUR REGION

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?



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



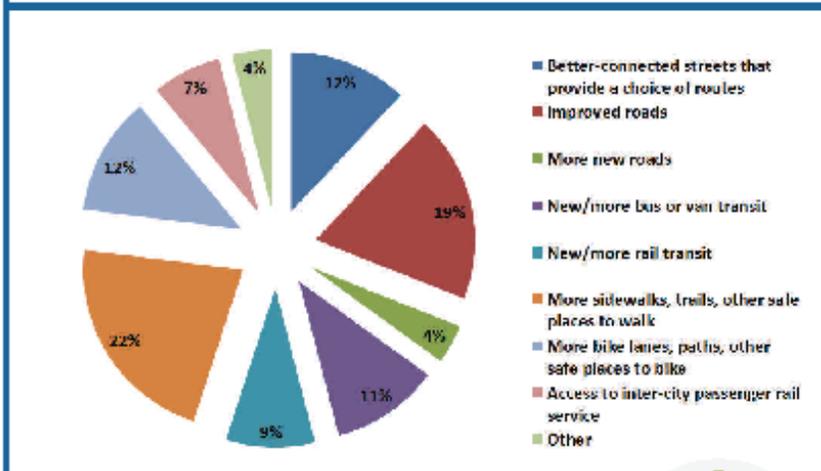
## TRANSPORTATION

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

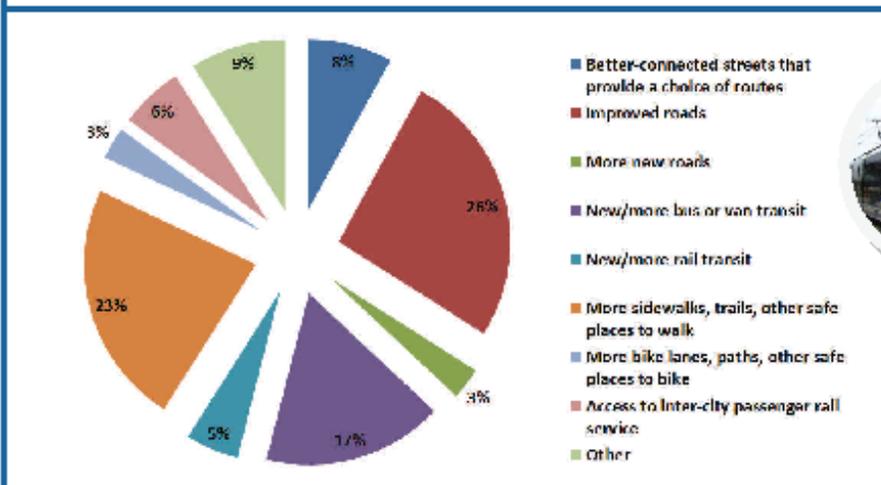
**Question 9:** When you think about the future transportation needs of your community, which 3 transportation features are the most important to you?

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](http://www.ConnectOurFuture.org)



Vibrant Communities – Robust Region

# ROWAN COUNTY, NC

## SAMPLE HEADLINES FROM QUESTION 12

“Help Wanted’ jobs available”

“Salisbury’s growth has been a model for other small towns throughout the US, thriving industrially and culturally while maintaining the small town feel”

“Electricity will never go out again”

“35% of residents walk or ride public transit to work/school”

“City council more representative of the diverse population”

## SAMPLE QUOTES FROM QUESTION 13

“Since moving here from Florida, this area will be our home forever more, small towns rock”

“Salisbury/Rowan county seems to be about 30 years behind other larger NC communities”

“Transportation and the need for transit will be key with coordinated plan for growth in the region”

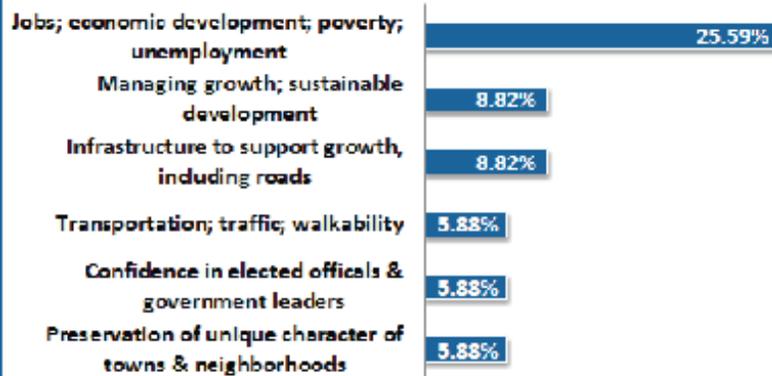
“Public education is struggling in our community”

“As the community grows, work needs to be done to keep the “small town” feel no matter how large it becomes”

## CHALLENGES

**Question 11:** Please identify a few things you think pose the biggest challenge for you, your community or the future of our region.

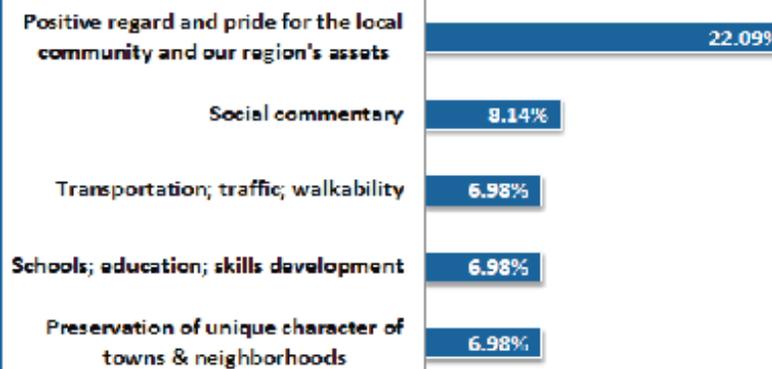
### Top 6 themes for Question 11



**Question 12:** Thinking about the biggest challenge that you identified above, fast forward 10 years or so. What would be the headline in your local newspaper if we had successfully met the challenge you mentioned?

**Question 13:** Is there anything else that is important about your community or our region that you want us to know?

### Top 5 themes for Question 13



Stanly County, NC



Vibrant Communities – Robust Region

STANLY COUNTY, NC

PHASE I RESULTS

WHAT IS CONNECT Our Future? THE BEST OF COMMUNITIES & THE REGION

**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

"Locust town center, downtown Oakboro/ cruise in"

"Morrow Mountain State Park"

"I go to the YMCA almost every other day and it is very helpful"

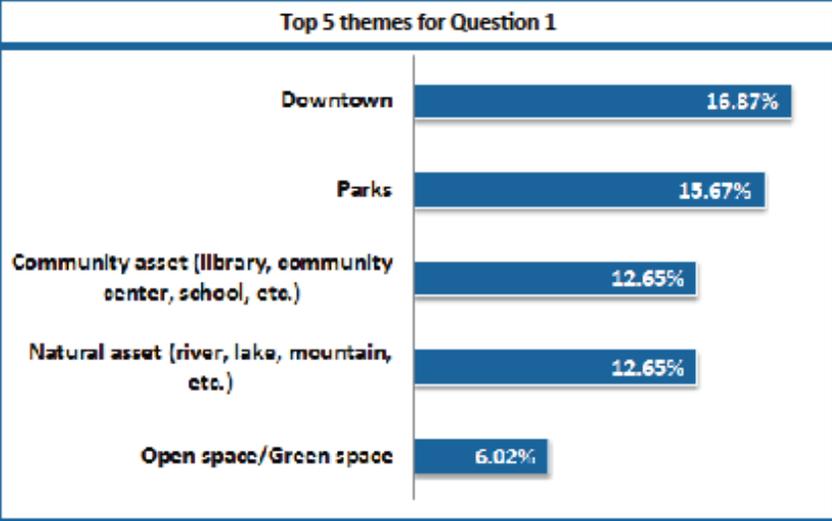
"Fork Farm and horse trails and Three Eagles Sanctuary"

"Scenic areas outside of towns"

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?



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



Friendly ... Fun ... Beautiful

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



Lakes, rivers, mountains ... Recreation ... Sports

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



Family ... Home ... Safety ... Relaxation

All responses are listed on the CONNECT Our Future website at [www.ConnectOurFuture.org](http://www.ConnectOurFuture.org)



Vibrant Communities – Robust Region

# STANLY COUNTY, NC

**WHERE DID WE TALK TO PEOPLE?**

Small group on November 29, 2012 with the Stanly County Senior Center

Open house on December 3, 2012 in Albemarle at the Stanly County Agricultural Civic Center

Open house on December 6, 2012 in Locust at the Stanly County Community College

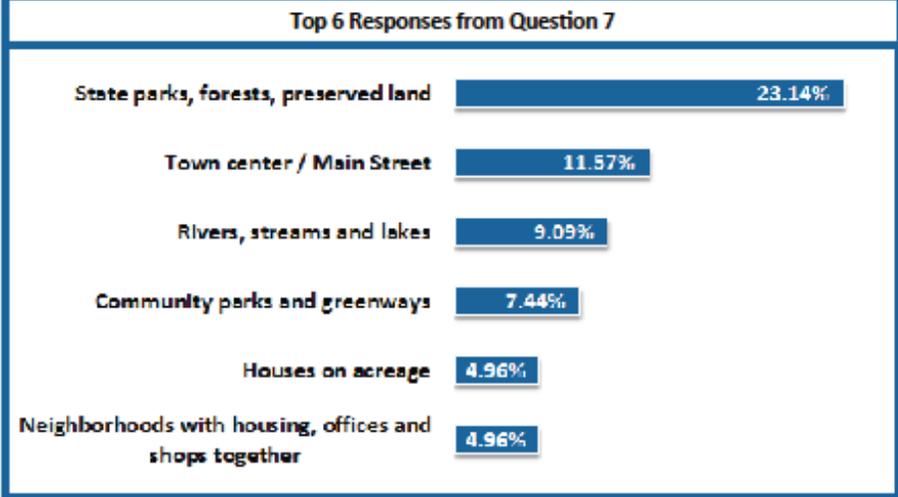
Small groups on January 23, 2013 with the Stanly County Chamber & Albemarle Development Corp. at Albemarle City Hall

Youth small group on March 20, 2013 with the Stanly County YMCA

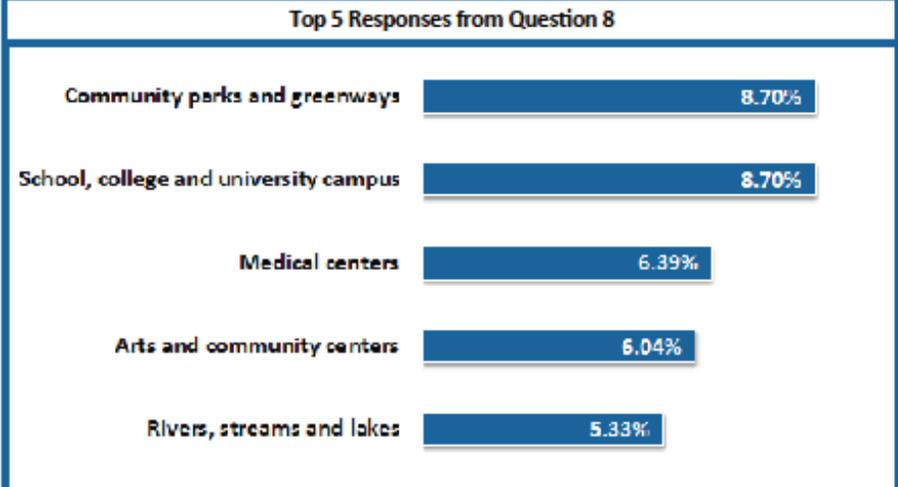
## FEATURES OF OUR REGION

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?



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



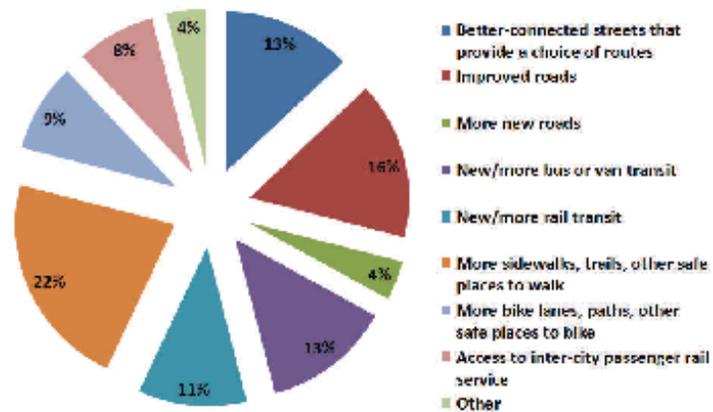
## TRANSPORTATION

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

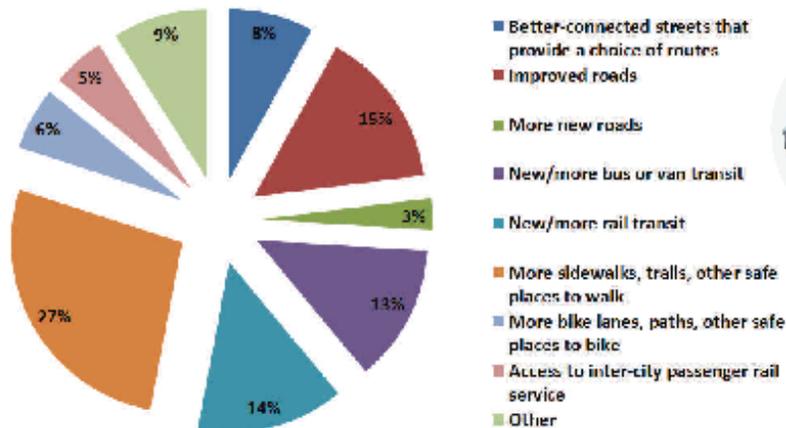
**Question 9:** When you think about the future transportation needs of your community, which 3 transportation features are the most important to you?

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](http://www.ConnectOurFuture.org)



Vibrant Communities – Robust Region

# STANLY COUNTY, NC

## SAMPLE HEADLINES FROM QUESTION 12

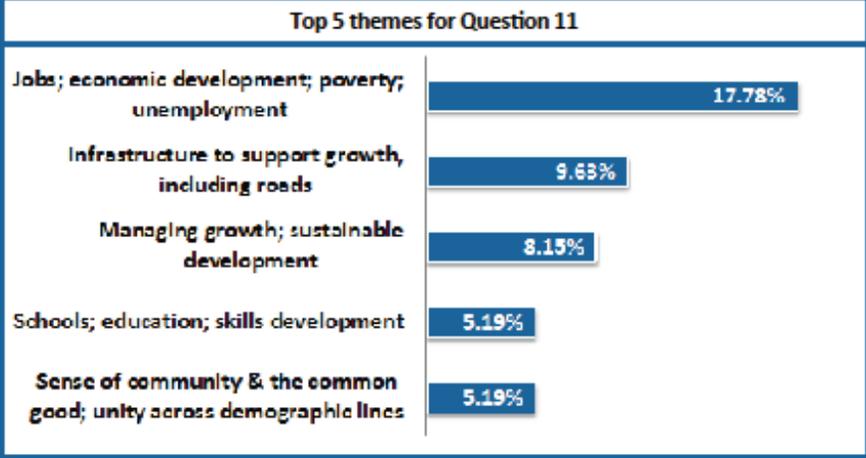
- "Stanly Co. continues to thrive and personal incomes are at an all time high"
- "Leaders say region's water needs met for future generations"
- "Stanly County has been able to control high density development"
- "Schools in rural areas of NC Central Piedmont region demonstrate high test scores across all demographics"
- "The community comes together and builds safer routes around the community"

## SAMPLE QUOTES FROM QUESTION 13

- "Our community is wonderful, of course there are challenges as with anyplace, but Stanly co. is a great place"
- "What industries can we recruit now with the existing infrastructure to get immediate jobs?"
- "Need to increase number of jobs in rural areas to reduce poverty"
- "We need help recruiting companies into our area"
- "Encourage development in a fashion that preserves/empowers the character of the region, Stanly Co. doesn't need to be Mecklenburg County or like the surrounding counties"

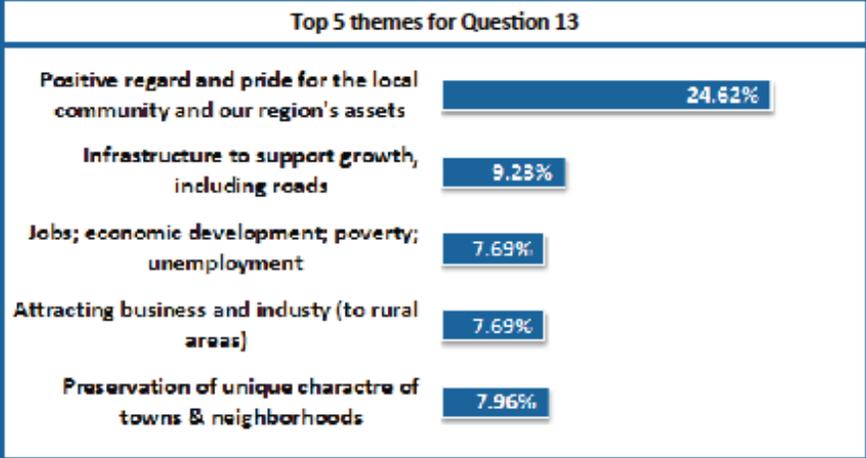
## CHALLENGES

**Question 11:** Please identify a few things you think pose the biggest challenge for you, your community or the future of our region.



**Question 12:** Thinking about the biggest challenge that you identified above, fast forward 10 years or so. What would be the headline in your local newspaper if we had successfully met the challenge you mentioned?

**Question 13:** Is there anything else that is important about your community or our region that you want us to know?



Union County, NC



Vibrant Communities – Robust Region

UNION COUNTY, NC



WHAT IS CONNECT Our Future? THE BEST OF COMMUNITIES & THE REGION

**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

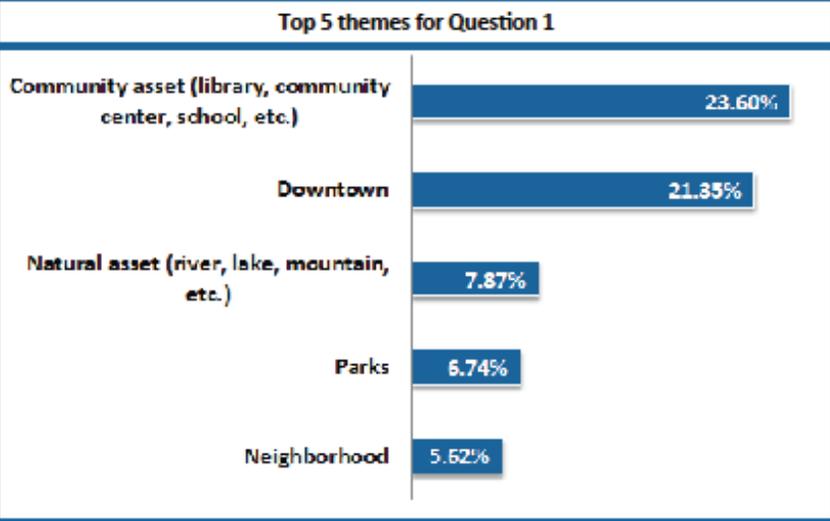
SAMPLE QUOTES FROM QUESTION 1

- "Union Co. Community Shelter"
- "I like the downtown in Monroe and Waxhaw, where the buildings and shop have some character and personality"
- "Lots of natural area but I love my home and its location"
- "Cane Creek Park - Union Co - beautiful trails, water and natural area, horse friendly"
- "I like my neighborhood because its quiet"

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?



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



Friendly ... Beautiful ... Historic

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



Education ... Open space & Green space ... History

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



Family ... Safety ... Home

All responses are listed on the CONNECT Our Future website at [www.ConnectOurFuture.org](http://www.ConnectOurFuture.org)



Vibrant Communities – Robust Region

# UNION COUNTY, NC

**WHERE DID WE TALK TO PEOPLE?**

Open house on November 8, 2012 at the Union County Agricultural Center in Union

Open house on November 29, 2012 at the Waxhaw Women’s Club in Waxhaw

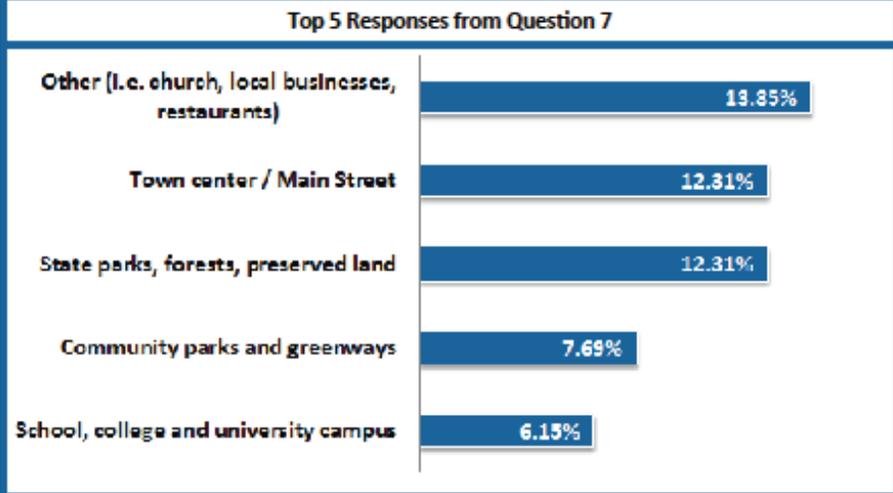
Small group on December 5, 2012 at the Union County Community Shelter

Small group on January 15, 2013 at the Union County Crisis Assistance Ministry

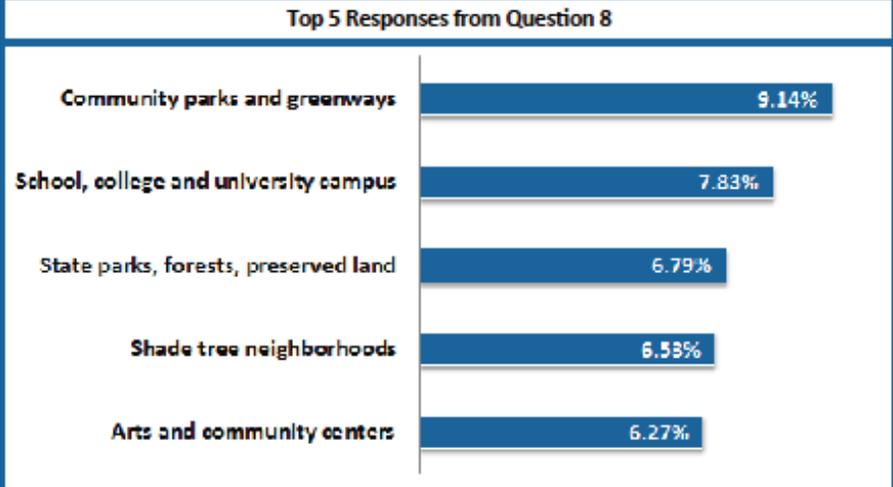
## FEATURES OF OUR REGION

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?



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



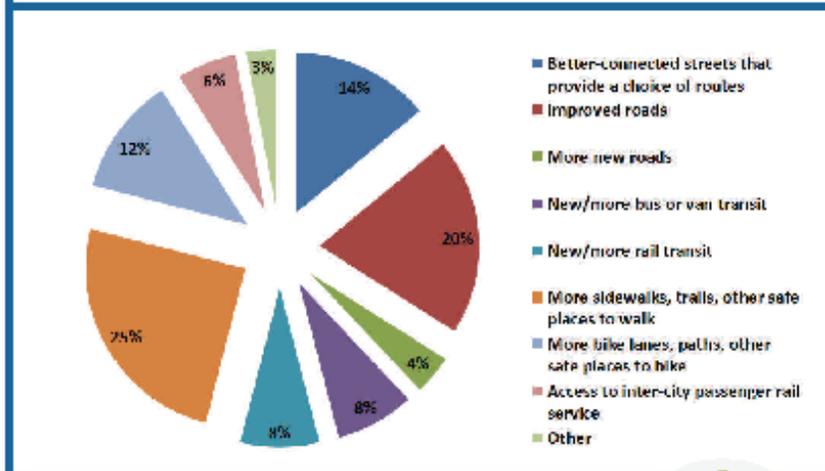
## TRANSPORTATION

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

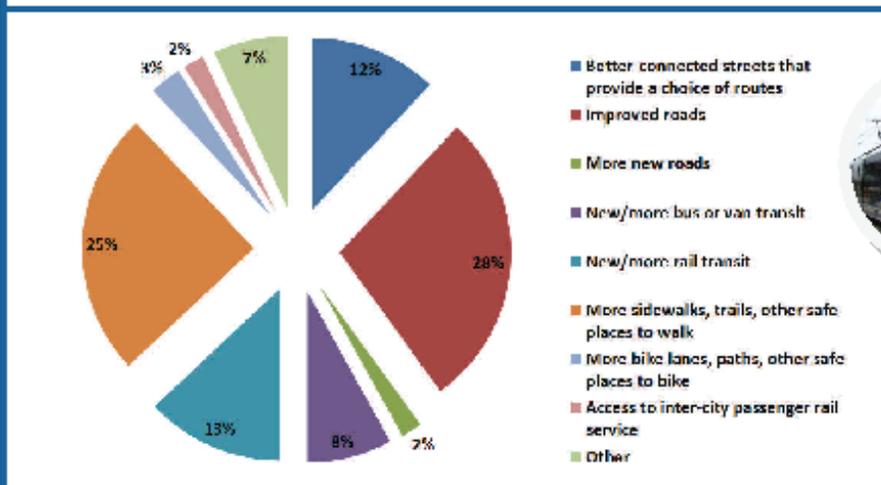
**Question 9:** When you think about the future transportation needs of your community, which 3 transportation features are the most important to you?

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](http://www.ConnectOurFuture.org)



Vibrant Communities – Robust Region

# UNION COUNTY, NC

## SAMPLE HEADLINES FROM QUESTION 12

- "Union Co. unemployment rate has reach its lowest point"
- "Union Co. finally gets public transportation and cut down excessive traffic"
- "There are no longer, orange, yellow or red air quality days or EPA announces our water safe to drink"
- "There is not a homeless situation in Monroe"
- "The growth potential has exploded due to strategic planning due to including public transportation, increase in diversity of people, businesses and families"

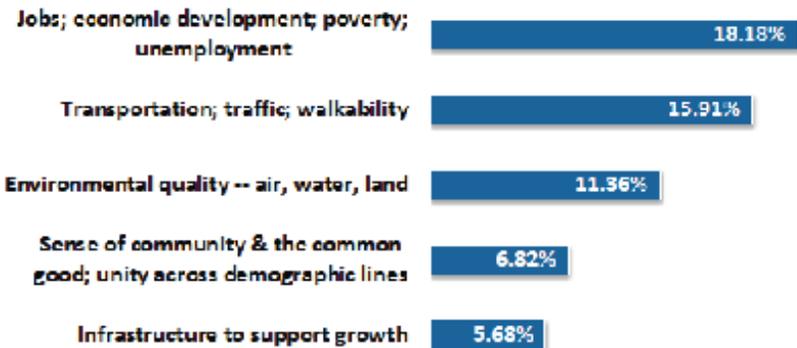
## SAMPLE QUOTES FROM QUESTION 13

- "We work hard for new industrial prospects"
- "We want officials to tackle the hard problems and not defer them"
- "Our community holds lots of potential, we are ready and eager to see positive growth and change"
- "We need activities community wide for children, recreation"
- "More low income housing for the low income families and the elderly"
- "The area has a lot of natural resources for growth and job creation"

## CHALLENGES

**Question 11:** Please identify a few things you think pose the biggest challenge for you, your community or the future of our region.

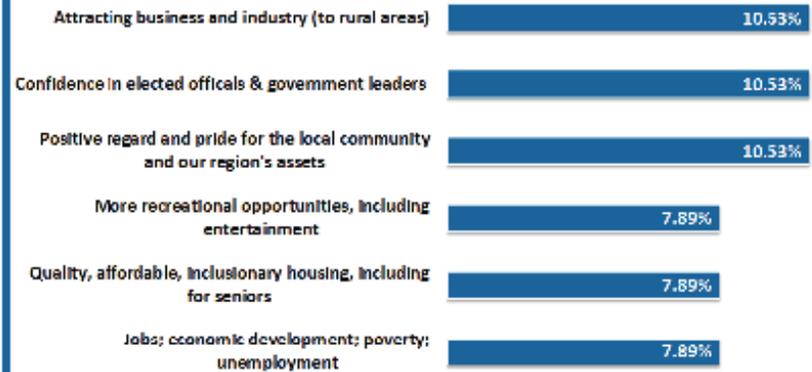
### Top 5 themes for Question 11



**Question 12:** Thinking about the biggest challenge that you identified above, fast forward 10 years or so. What would be the headline in your local newspaper if we had successfully met the challenge you mentioned?

**Question 13:** Is there anything else that is important about your community or our region that you want us to know?

### Top 6 themes for Question 13



Union County, SC



Vibrant Communities – Robust Region

UNION COUNTY, SC

PHASE I RESULTS

WHAT IS CONNECT Our Future? THE BEST OF COMMUNITIES & THE REGION

**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

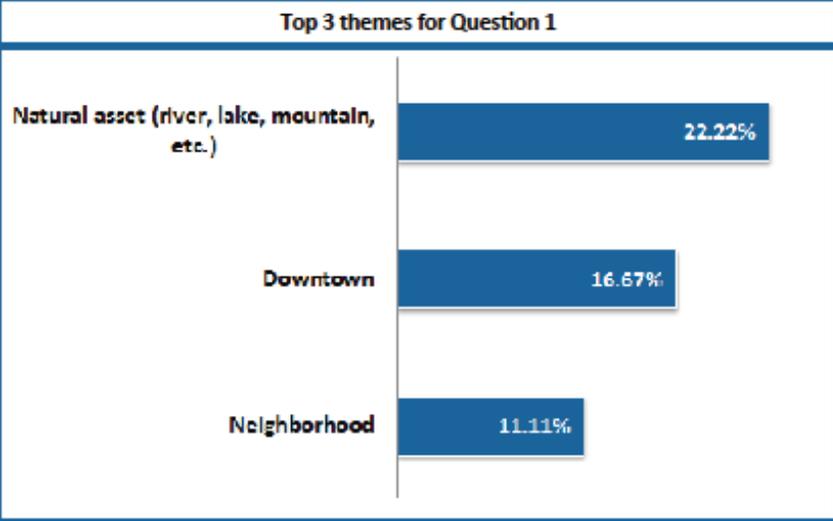
SAMPLE QUOTES FROM QUESTION 1

- “Lake Wylie”
- “Downtown Union”
- “Small community/ family church, quiet communities/sporting activities”
- “Small town home good neighbors, museum, lots of history”
- “Center place or community”

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?



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



Convenient ... Friendly  
... Open ... Peaceful

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



Family ... Neighbors  
... Quality of life

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



Home ... Safety

All responses are listed on the CONNECT Our Future website at [www.ConnectOurFuture.org](http://www.ConnectOurFuture.org)



Vibrant Communities – Robust Region

# UNION COUNTY, SC

**WHERE DID WE TALK TO PEOPLE?**

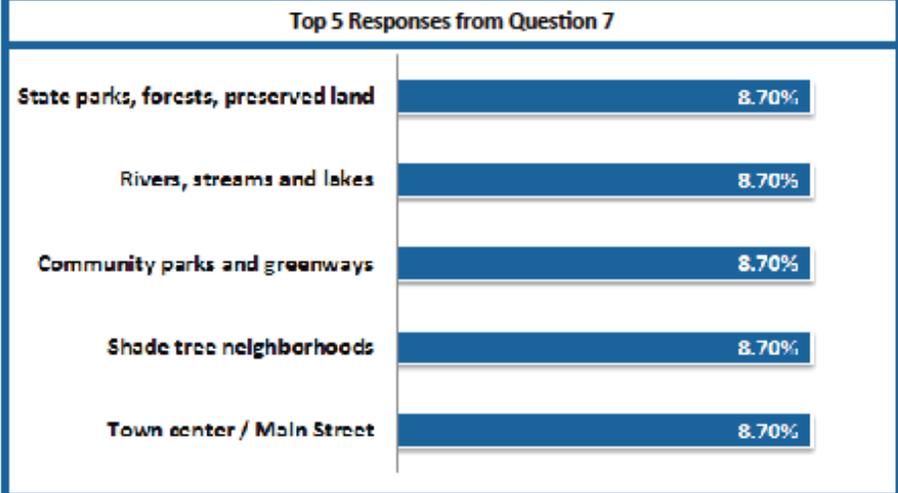
Small group on February 8, 2013 with the Union County Chambers Council at the City of Union

Open House on February 28, 2013 at the Union County Advanced Technology Center in Union

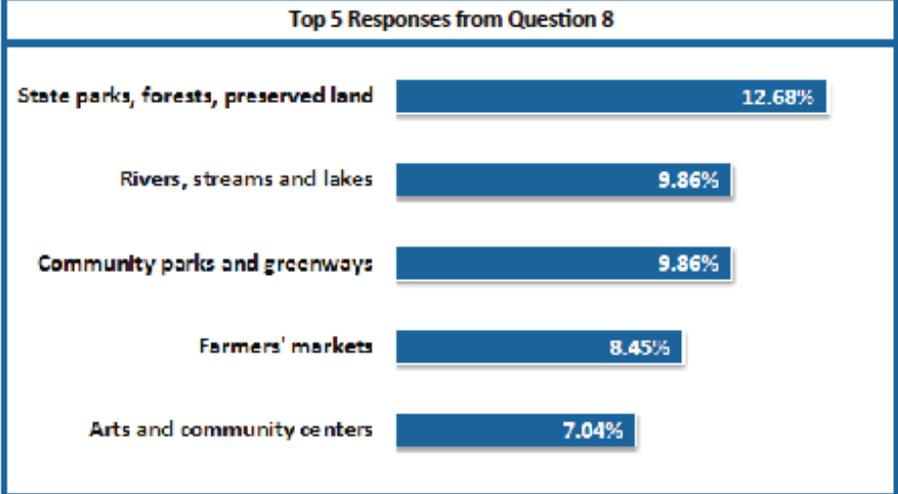
## FEATURES OF OUR REGION

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?



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



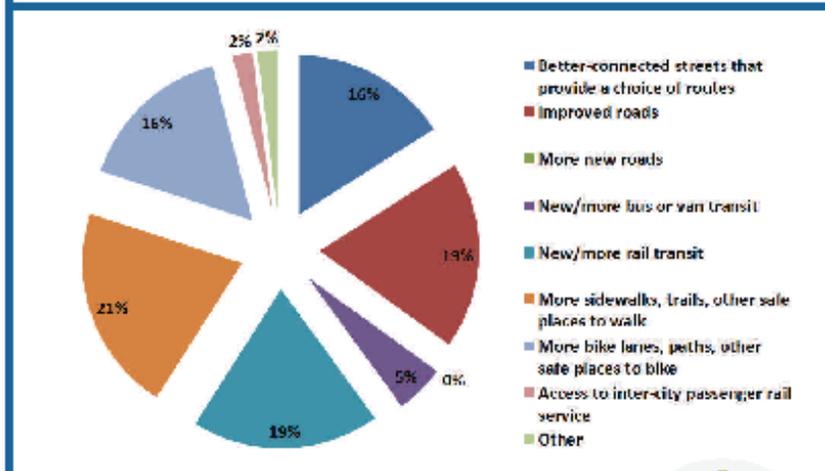
## TRANSPORTATION

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

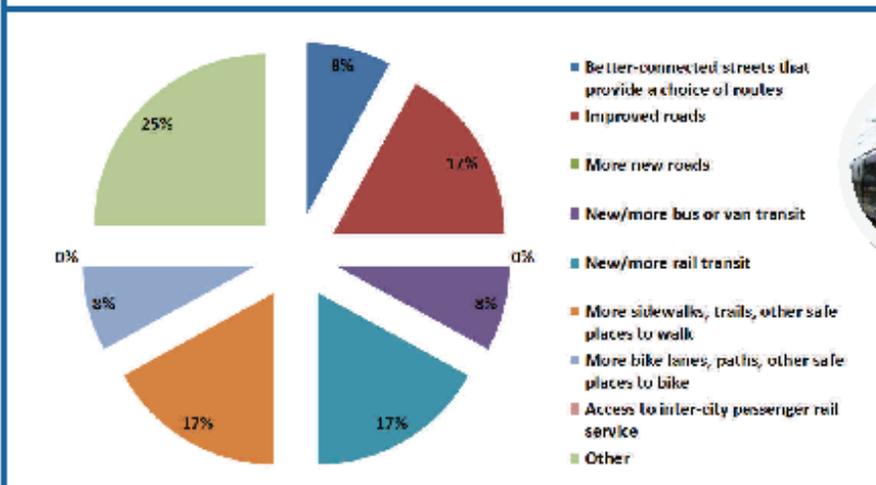
**Question 9:** When you think about the future transportation needs of your community, which 3 transportation features are the most important to you?

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](http://www.ConnectOurFuture.org)



Vibrant Communities – Robust Region

# UNION COUNTY, SC

## SAMPLE HEADLINES FROM QUESTION 12

“10,000 jobs coming to Union at the next opening of the new plant”

“Ten years later, Charlotte regional transit is a wild success, density has been confined to high growth transit corridors”

“New stores coming soon to the Lake Wylie area”

“Road systems adequate for locals and commuters”

## SAMPLE QUOTES FROM QUESTION 13

“How will Union benefit from the prosperous growth in the region?”

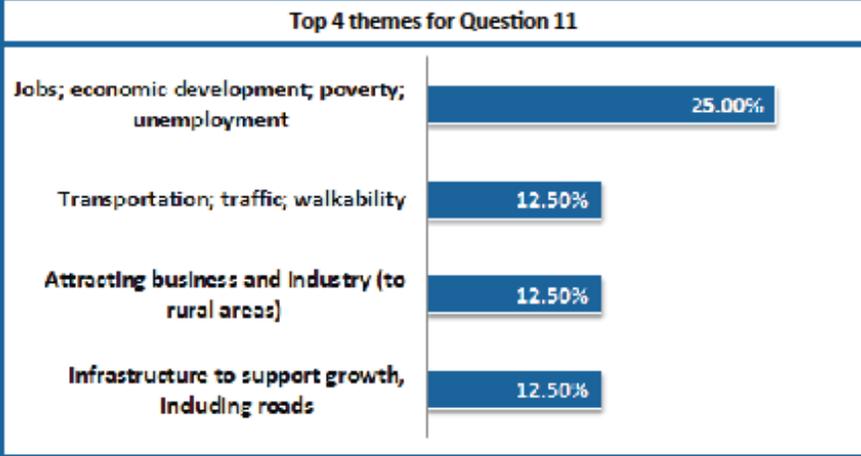
“Pride in our town”

“A great place to live”

“Preservation of open space is important”

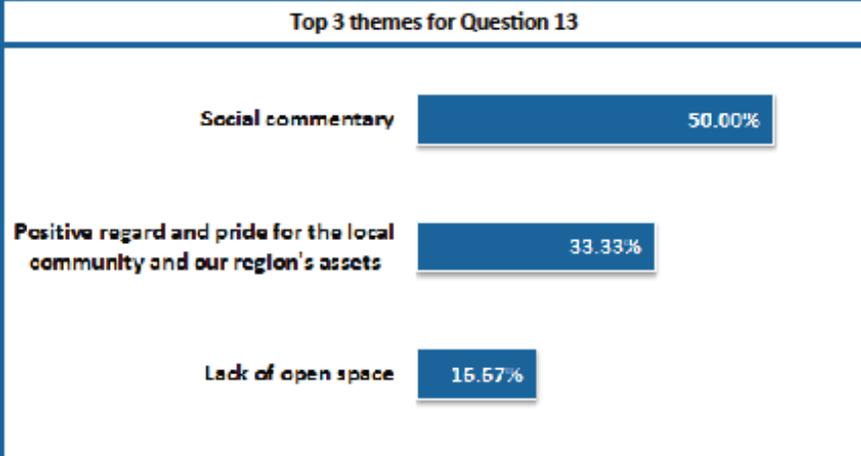
## CHALLENGES

**Question 11:** Please identify a few things you think pose the biggest challenge for you, your community or the future of our region.



**Question 12:** Thinking about the biggest challenge that you identified above, fast forward 10 years or so. What would be the headline in your local newspaper if we had successfully met the challenge you mentioned?

**Question 13:** Is there anything else that is important about your community or our region that you want us to know?



York County, SC



Vibrant Communities – Robust Region

YORK COUNTY, SC

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

"I really like Glencairn Gardens, it is a really beautiful attraction with gardens, trees and ponds, it's a popular place for high school students to take prom pictures"

"Outdoor activity area, Manchester, Winthrop Park, Cherry Park"

"Downtown York and Clover, particularly historical downtown area"

"Winthrop University adds so much to community"

"My neighborhood - great people, near everything, community feel"

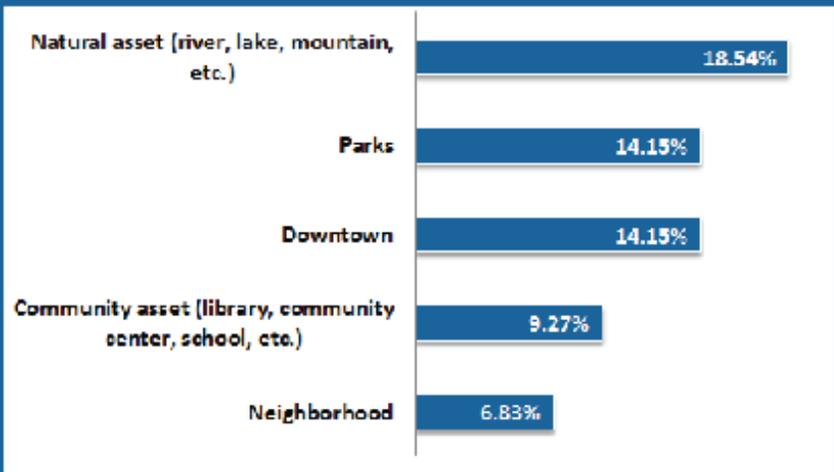
THE BEST OF COMMUNITIES & THE REGION

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 ... Beautiful ... Quiet

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



Family ... Walkable ... Natural beauty

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



Safety ... Community

All responses are listed on the CONNECT Our Future website at [www.ConnectOurFuture.org](http://www.ConnectOurFuture.org)



Vibrant Communities – Robust Region

# YORK COUNTY, SC

## WHERE DID WE TALK TO PEOPLE?

Small group on December 12, 2012 with the Catawba Indian Nation

Open house on January 10, 2013 at the Rock Hill Operations Center in Rock Hill

Small group on January 16, 2013 with the Indian Land Action Council

Open house on January 31, 2013 at the Clover Community Center in Clover

Small group on February 1, 2013 at the Hive

2 small groups on February 21, 2013 with the Kiwanis Club at the Rock Hill City Club

Open house on February 21, 2013 at the York Recreation Center in York

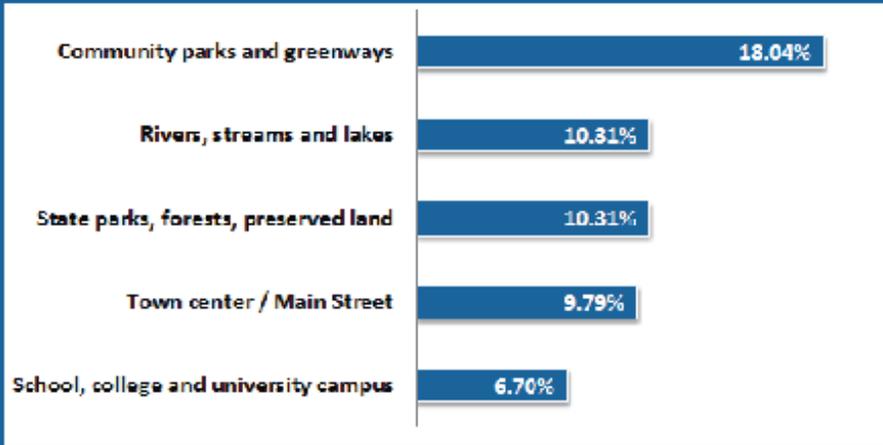
Youth small group on March 27, 2013 with the Boys and Girls Club of York County

## FEATURES OF OUR REGION

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

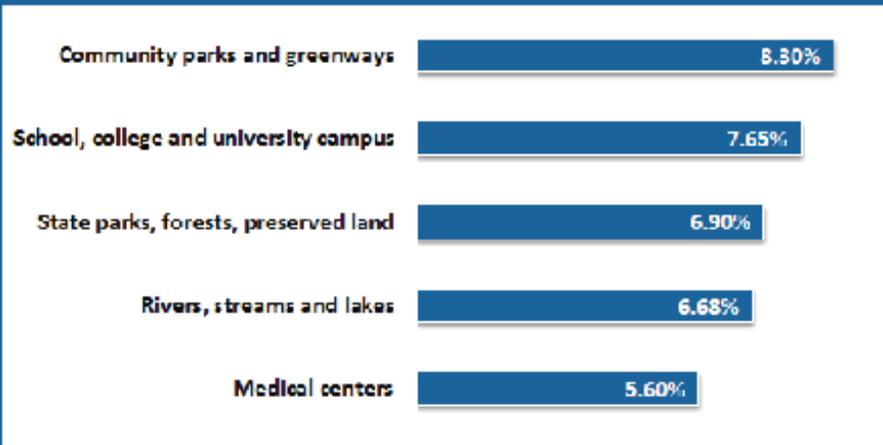
**Question 7:** What is the one feature that best represents the place you named in Question 1?

### 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



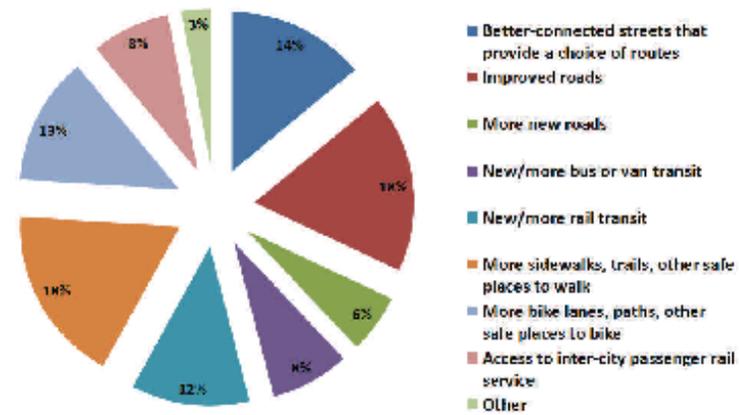
## TRANSPORTATION

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

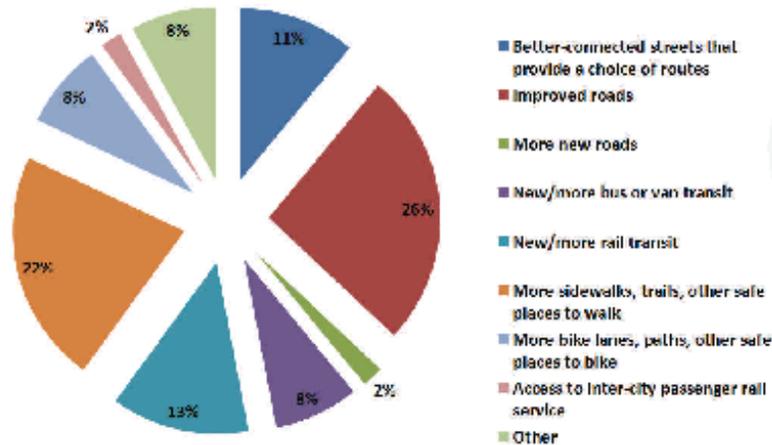
**Question 9:** When you think about the future transportation needs of your community, which 3 transportation features are the most important to you?

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](http://www.ConnectOurFuture.org)



Vibrant Communities – Robust Region

# YORK COUNTY, SC

## SAMPLE HEADLINES FROM QUESTION 12

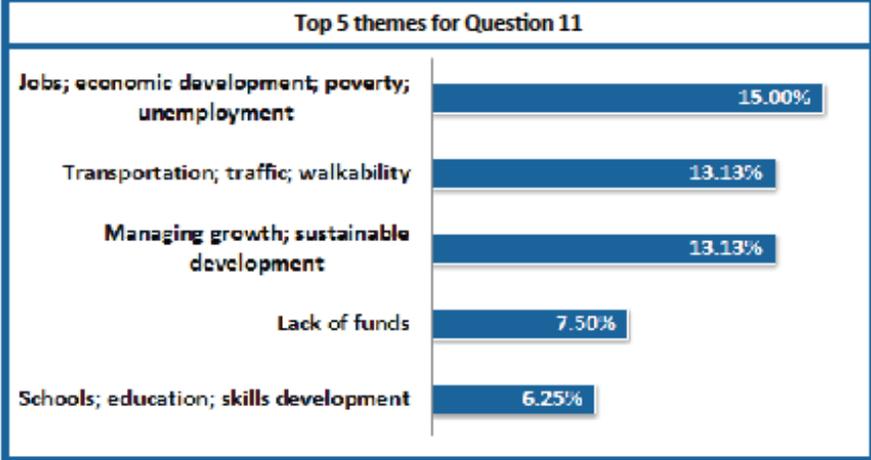
- "Unemployment dips below 3% as local entrepreneurs find global success"
- "Rock Hill, most bicycle friendly city in the SE!"
- "Rapid growth in our region over the past 10 years is highlighted by smart growth that raised the quality of life for all residents"
- "Rock Hill a thriving city where the needs of all its citizens"
- "Unemployment rate in York county is the lowest in the nation due to educated workforce"

## SAMPLE QUOTES FROM QUESTION 13

- "This is a nice area with great potential and hopefully it can grow to a national destination"
- "Because of Charlotte, Rock Hill has become somewhat of an add-on to the city. They need to be able to stand alone"
- "It is important to keep roads repaired in a timely manner"
- "Good people wanting a good life for their families, good jobs"
- "Public transportation... There is a need for economical, reliable, safe mass transit in York County and in the City of Rock Hill"

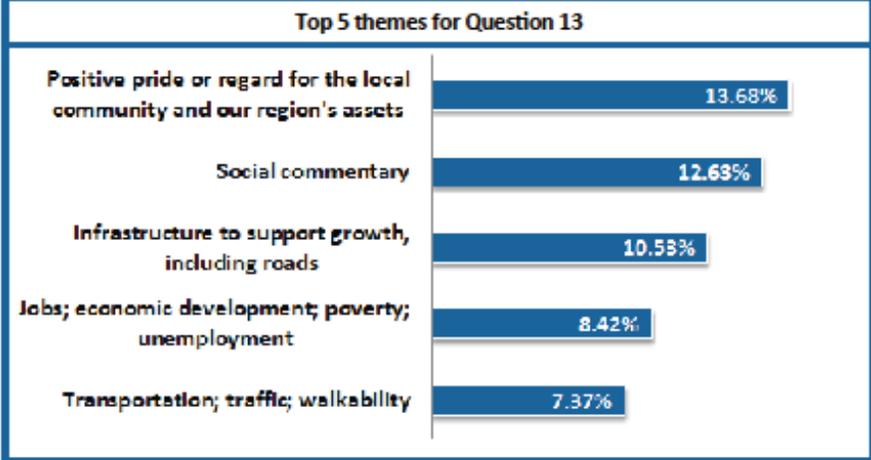
## CHALLENGES

**Question 11:** Please identify a few things you think pose the biggest challenge for you, your community or the future of our region.



**Question 12:** Thinking about the biggest challenge that you identified above, fast forward 10 years or so. What would be the headline in your local newspaper if we had successfully met the challenge you mentioned?

**Question 13:** Is there anything else that is important about your community or our region that you want us to know?



# Youth Report



Vibrant Communities Robust Region

## YOUTH

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

"I go to the YMCA almost every day and it's a very helpful way to keep myself active, it brings the community together"

"Downtown Rock Hill, there area always fun activities and events going on"

"The park in my neighborhood because I can run and swim there"

"Carolina Mall, I would really miss if it went away"

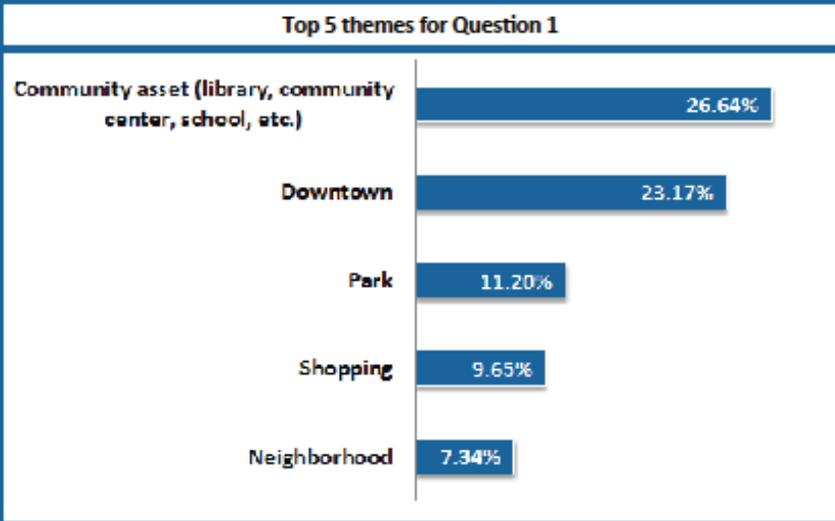
"My neighborhood, lots of trees and green areas, family friendly"

### 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?



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



Clean ... Fun ...  
Interesting ...  
Beautiful ... Relaxing

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



Education ... Recreation...  
Family ... Open space &  
Green Space

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



Community ...  
Safety

All responses are listed on the CONNECT Our Future website at [www.ConnectOurFuture.org](http://www.ConnectOurFuture.org)



Vibrant Communities – Robust Region

# YOUTH

**WHERE DID WE TALK TO PEOPLE?**

February 7, 2013 at UNCC in Mecklenburg County

February 16, 2013 with Youth Davidson in Mecklenburg County

March 7, 2013 with HOLA in Anson County

March 13, 2013 with Youth Leadership Statesville in Iredell County

March 14, 2013 with the Salisbury-Rowan Community Action Agency in Rowan County

March 20, 2013 with the Stanly County YMCA in Stanly County

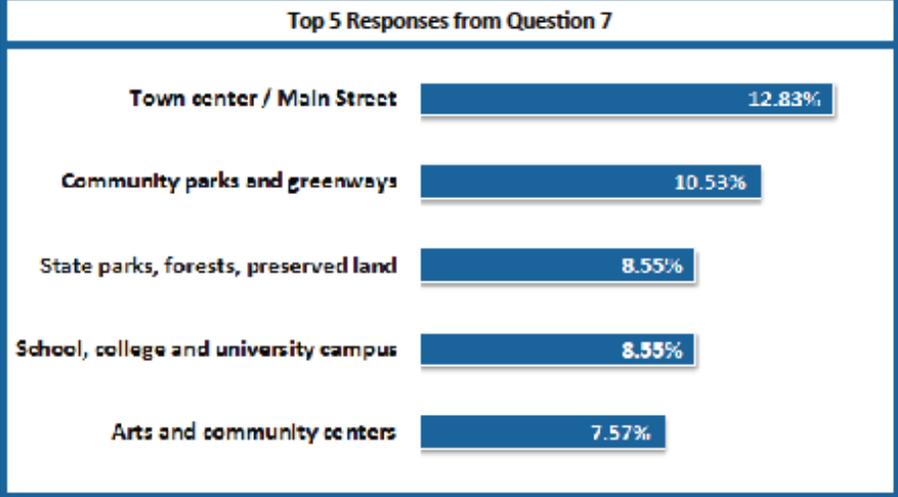
March 22, 2013 with the Cabarrus-Kannapolis Early College High School in Cabarrus County

March 27, 2013 with the Boys and Girls Club of York County in York County

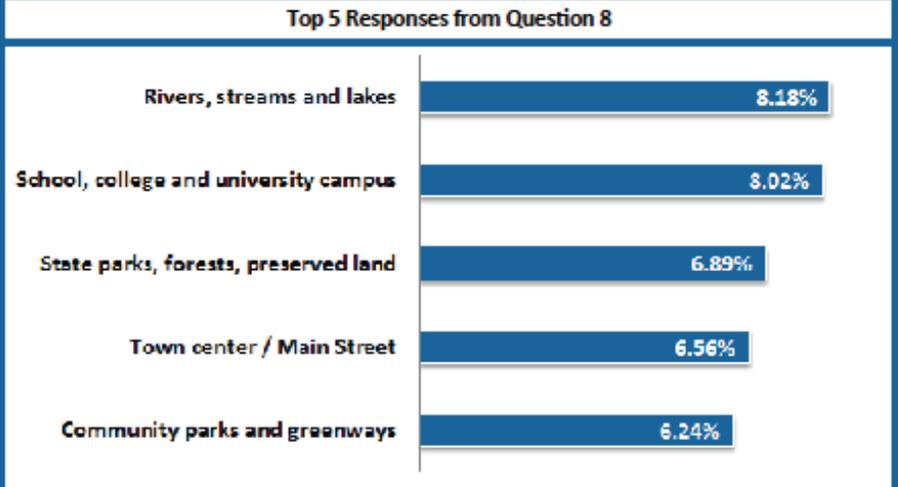
## FEATURES OF OUR REGION

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?



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



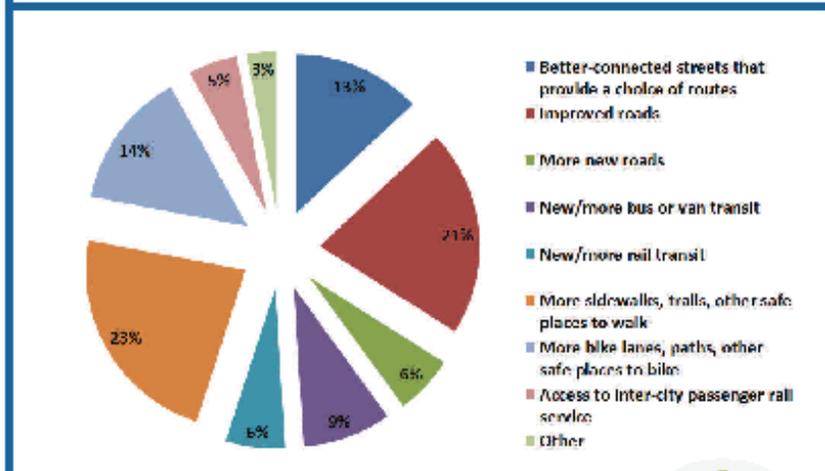
## TRANSPORTATION

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

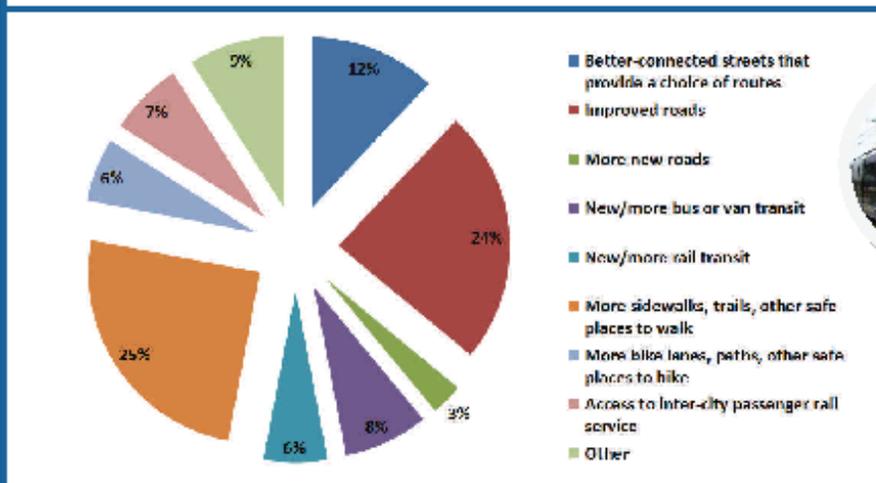
**Question 9:** When you think about the future transportation needs of your community, which 3 transportation features are the most important to you?

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](http://www.ConnectOurFuture.org)



Vibrant Communities – Robust Region

# YOUTH

## SAMPLE HEADLINES FROM QUESTION 12

"Hop on, the opening of Charlotte's new railway system"

"A large reduction in smog, cleaner air, and possibly even people in better health due to additional walking"

"Growth will have been monitored, controlled and contained, Charlotte, ranks most sustainable city in the world"

"Many job opportunities are now available to our youth and young adults in 14 counties between NC and SC"

"Statesville on the map - new attractions"

## SAMPLE QUOTES FROM QUESTION 13

"There needs to be more teen oriented events and place to go other than the mall"

"Access to public transportation on weekends should be improved"

"Recycling areas/going green, helping keep product wastes low and reusing is important"

"Our community needs to put more focus into music education"

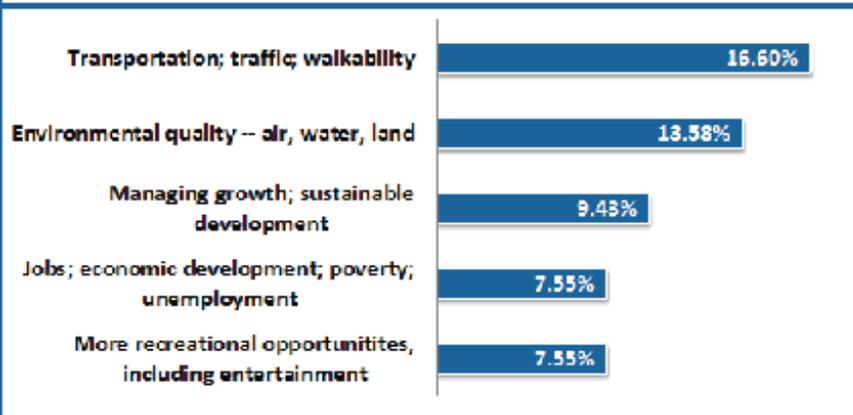
"The future relies on people who are willing to step up and speak up for their community"

"We need better county leaders, younger leaders, because I doubt the ones that we have now really care about teenagers and young adults"

## CHALLENGES

**Question 11:** Please identify a few things you think pose the biggest challenge for you, your community or the future of our region.

### Top 5 themes for Question 11



**Question 12:** Thinking about the biggest challenge that you identified above, fast forward 10 years or so. What would be the headline in your local newspaper if we had successfully met the challenge you mentioned?

**Question 13:** Is there anything else that is important about your community or our region that you want us to know?

### Top 6 themes for Question 13

