

Appendix F: Complete Regional SWOT Analysis

Strengths of the Region

Lower costs of living/taxes – 10 votes
Physical assets - mountains, rivers, trails – 8 votes
Proximity to Charlotte, Asheville, coast, mountains, etc. – 7 votes
Educational opportunities (public education, private schools, early college, community college and Lenoir Rhyne University) – 4 votes
Family friendly – 4 votes
Philanthropy (private and community) – 4 votes
Abundant water supply – 3 votes
Diversifying community – 3 votes
Low crime rate – 3 votes
Strong arts community – 3 votes
Moderate Climate – 2 votes
Transportation (little congestion) – 2 votes
Desire to improve – 1 vote
Quality of Life – 1 vote
Competent local government – no votes
Excellent location for businesses to start and thrive – no votes
Events and festivals – no votes
Google/Apple facilities – no votes
Healthcare access – no votes
Manufacturing skilled workforce – no votes
Number of family owned/closely held businesses engaged in community – no votes
State, county and municipal parks – no votes
Strong/growing brewery/distillery business – no votes
Strong faith community – no votes
Potential of revitalization – no votes

Weaknesses of the Region

Lack of entertainment outlets for 21-40 year olds – 8 votes
Lack of high paying jobs – 8 votes
Lack of iconic attraction – 5 votes
Lack of new housing – 5 votes
Out-migration of our young people's future leaders – 5 votes
Inadequate promotion of region – 4 votes
Lack of shell buildings for new businesses – 4 votes
Diverse part of community not feeling included in decision-making process – 2 votes
Lack of regional partnerships between local governments – 2 votes
Lower educational attainment than competing metro areas – 2 votes
Stagnant entry pay with increasing job requirements/qualifications – 2 votes

Lack of broadband in rural areas – 1 vote
Lack of employable workforce – 1 vote
Lack of high profile employees – 1 vote
Lack of job opportunities for recent college graduates – 1 vote
Low access to public transportation – 1 vote
Not supporting our local businesses enough – 1 vote
Too close to Charlotte and Asheville – 1 vote
Unwillingness to buy into the big picture thinking – 1 vote
Disconnect in image of who we are and who we want to be – no votes
Lack of apartments/rental homes that are not income based (subsidized) – no votes
Lack of downtown/walkable housing – no votes
Limited nightlife options – no votes
Lack of professional sporting teams – no votes

Opportunities for the Region

Development of a collaborative regional marketing plan – 9 votes
Recruit/retain employable and diverse workforce – 7 votes
Job training to fill vacant job openings – 6 votes
Surveying young people for what they want – 6 votes
To construct shell buildings – 4 votes
Business development/expansion – 4 votes
Address educational attainment goals regionally – 3 votes
Identify more cultural events to draw more visitors – 3 votes
Promotional/marketing plan for the opening of the NC School of Science & Math – 3 votes
Develop outreach plan for local leaders to engage minorities – 2 votes
Expand infrastructure to areas of need for businesses (grants) – 2 votes
Networking and integrating our civic efforts and groups – 2 votes
Marketing our natural resources – 2 votes
Getting local government/homebuilders to address need for new housing – 1 vote
Promote our strong fiber network – 1 vote
Ability to serve businesses that use a lot of power/water – no votes
Address need for renovating housing – no votes
Good place for families to relocate to – no votes

Threats to the Region

Region's inability to solve long-standing problems – 10 votes
Not responding to migration of young adults – 9 votes
The region not developing regional marketing plan for another 15 years – 9 votes
Over reliance on manufacturing – 6 votes
Major businesses leaving the area – 4 votes
National trend of automation of jobs – 4 votes
Void in skill sets for manufacturing jobs – 4 votes

Not using opportunity with NC School of Science and Math and other projects – 3 votes
Aging population – 2 votes
Lack of political cooperation – 2 votes
Competition with other small Charlotte region communities – 1 vote
Poor perception as a region of small country towns – 1 vote
Are we already too late to improve the region significantly? – no votes
Competition between small businesses (saturation of markets) leading to closing of small business due to lack of support – no votes
Complacency with status quo – no votes
National trend of online retail affecting local retail – no votes
National trend of unfunded mandates – no votes
Not addressing stagnant wages – no votes
Not having jobs for young people who may move away – no votes
Not sharing best practices among businesses and not seeking help – no votes
Unwillingness to agree on the identity of our region – no votes