

# 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 and 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