



## **Responses from Participants Growth Management Workshop, June 28, Franklin**

### Executive Summary

Of the estimated 50 attendees at the June 28 Growth Management Workshop, more than 60 percent (32) completed two-page questionnaires about their concerns and about the questions they most wanted answered.

Most of the respondents (20) identified themselves as affiliated with local governments as elected officials, full-time staffers, or citizen board members. Because of the Franklin location, most of those filling out forms (11) were from Macon County, with Jackson, Swain, Haywood, and Clay Counties also represented. Among the highlights:

Beyond the focus on current hot topics, there was a clear undercurrent of support for a coordinated effort to address multiple challenges in a comprehensive way. The top two challenges listed by respondents were hot-button issues related to development on unstable slopes and the protection of rivers and streams. But “dealing with a combination of concerns while nurturing a strong local and regional economy” rated No. 3.

Later in the survey, when asked to list questions they most wanted answered, respondents frequently mentioned hopes for strategies that could bring the whole community under the planning tent. The next most popular categories of questions had to do with shared data gathering and with identifying best practices for a broad range of approaches to planning and implementing ideas. The highest-rated response when survey participants were asked to rank factors most affecting their capacity to cope with growth challenges was access to information, followed by technical and financial assistance.

The regional theme also showed up in their responses to a question about the scale at maps used for growth analysis. The county scale got the most votes (13). But that selection was closely followed by votes for a regional perspective (12).

A complete look at all the numbers from the survey is below.

Ben Brown  
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## Part I

### **(1) Total respondents completing forms: 32**

### **(2) Geographic distribution/affiliations:**

- Macon County: 11
- Jackson County: 7
- Swain County: 4
- Clay County: 2
- Haywood County: 1
- Cross-county affiliations: Division of Community Assistance (2); Land of Sky COG (1); Duke Energy (1), McGill Assoc. (1); Southwestern Commission COG (1)
- Media: 1

### **(3) Number of respondents listing local government affiliations (elected, fulltime staff, or citizen boards): 20**

### **(4) Ranking of concerns**

Respondents were asked to choose from a list of possible growth and development challenges in their jurisdictions and to rank the top three concerns in order.

#### **Top-ranked concerns**

- 1) Slope and ridgetop development – safety and stability issues
- 2) Protection of streams and rivers from erosion, sedimentation, etc.
- 3) Dealing with a combination of concerns while nurturing a strong local and regional economy.
- 4) Farmland and open space protection.
- 5) Long-term access to drinking water.
- 6) Affordable housing

#### **Responses by point totals**

(No. 1 ranking gets 3 points; No. 2, 2 points; No. 3, 1 point. Some respondents double-ranked some choices; so there are more rankings receiving points than respondents.)

A: Slope and ridgetop development – safety and stability issues.

Point range: 3, 1, 1, 1, 2, 2, 3, 3, 1, 3, 2, 3, 3, 3, 2, 3, 3, 3, 3, 1, 2, 3, 3, 2, 1, 3, 3, 2.

Total points: 65

B: Slope and ridgetop development – deteriorating viewsheds.

Point range: 1, 1, 2, 1.

Total points: 5





C: Protection of streams and rivers from erosion, sedimentation, etc.  
Point range: 2, 3, 3, 1, 3, 3, 2, 3, 2, 3, 2, 2, 2, 2, 2, 1, 2, 1, 2, 2, 2.  
Total points: 47

D: Long-term access to drinking water.  
Point range: 3, 2, 1, 3, 2, 2.  
Total points: 13

E: Planning for appropriate extensions of sewer and water systems.  
Points: Total: 0

F: Transportation (roads) and transit planning.  
Point range: 1, 2, 1.  
Total points: 4

G: Farmland and open space protection.  
Point range: 3, 2, 1, 2, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 3, 1, 3.  
Total points: 22

H: Unappealing commercial corridors.  
Point range: 1, 3, 1.  
Total points: 5

I: Affordable housing.  
Point range: 2, 2, 1, 2, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1.  
Total points: 12

J: Suburban-style development in rural areas.  
Point range: 1, 3, 3.  
Total: 7

K: Dealing with any combination of above while nurturing a strong local and regional economy.  
Point range: 2, 1, 3, 1, 2, 2, 1, 2, 1, 2, 3, 1, 3.  
Total: 24

L: Threats to property rights because of potential regulations:  
Points: 1.

### **Write-in growth and development challenges**

- Slow government process (2)
- Disappearing small town feel
- Energy access/efficiency
- Need for regional perspective





- Lack of knowledge by property owners, builders, developers
- Need to attract and maintain support staffs (budget/tax increases)
- Getting the development density on slopes to match access to sewer, water, etc.
- Housing quality
- Light pollution
- Mediating the effects of development close to public lands, wildlife corridors, etc
- Access to health care

## Part II

### (1) Rating access to maps and other info.

Respondents were asked to indicate on a scale of 1 to 10 their confidence about having access to maps and information about growth and development.

**Average confidence rating: 6.78 out of possible 10.**

Range of responses: 3, 8, 4, 4, 5, 7, 6, 9, 10, 10, 5, 8, 3, 8, 8, 3, 8, 6, 3, 3, 6.5, 8, 10, 7, 10, 10, 8, 10, 4, 8, 8, 2

### (2) Scale preference for measuring trends.

Respondents were asked about the scale of maps projecting growth and development trends that would most interest them. (some respondents indicated more than one preference)

- County: 13
- Region: 12
- Watershed: 4
- Individual property parcel: 1
- Incorporated town: 1,
- Township or community: 1,
- State: 0

Write-ins for preferred scale:

- county to region: 1
- 2-foot contours: 1





**(3) Most important factors enabling action on growth and development issues.**

Respondents were asked to rank five factors from one to five. Here’s how they ranked, with the lowest point totals indicating the highest rankings. (Some respondents have ties and multiple answers; some respondents ranked fewer than five choices or none)

-- Access to reliable information about growth and development trends.  
Points: 3, 3, 1, 3, 1, 2, 5, 1, 1, 1, 1, 2, 3, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 3, 1, 5, 1, 1, 5, 3, 4, 4.  
TOTAL: 61  
**Average: 2.1**

-- (tie) Having technical assistance for implementation.  
Points: 2, 5, 3, 5, 5, 1, 3, 2, 3, 5, 4, 1, 2, 2, 2, 4, 5, 5, 2, 5, 2, 2, 2, 2, 3, 2, 1, 1, 2.  
TOTAL: 83  
**Average: 2.9**

-- (tie) Having financial assistance for implementation.  
Points: 1, 1, 2, 2, 4, 2, 4, 2, 4, 4, 4, 5, 3, 1, 5, 4, 5, 3, 4, 3, 4, 1, 3, 1, 4, 4, 1, 2, 2, 3.  
TOTAL: 88  
**Average: 2.9**

-- Understanding what citizens think.  
Points: 4, 1, 4, 2, 3, 3, 1, 3, 2, 3, 2, 5, 4, 3, 3, 3, 4, 3, 2, 4, 5, 4, 5, 2, 3, 5, 3, 1.  
TOTAL: 87  
**Average: 3.1**

-- Knowing what other communities have done to guide growth.  
Points: 5, 4, 5, 1 4, 5, 4, 5, 5, 2, 3, 4, 5, 4, 5, 2, 2, 2, 3, 5, 4, 3, 3, 5, 4, 4, 5, 5.  
TOTAL: 108  
**Average: 3.9**

Write-in factors

-- All of the above in more or less equal measure.  
Total: 6 points; average 3.0

**(4) Questions respondents most want answered**

The questions can be organized under the following four categories. The numbers in parentheses indicate the number of respondents’ questions that specifically hit on that theme.





### **A. An inclusive public engagement process.**

-- What are best models and strategies for informing/engaging/getting buy-in from the whole community for planning and implementing proposals? The community includes the general public, real estate development professionals, and elected officials. (11)

### **B. Information gathering, compiling, analyzing, and sharing.**

-- What are best strategies for more effectively compiling and organizing trend data that can help the whole region do a better job planning? (5)

-- How do we know how much of what kind of development is sustainable? How do we measure “carrying capacity” of the land (slopes, watersheds, etc.)? (8)

-- How can we best identify and protect areas where overdevelopment might have the most severe and immediate impact on public health and safety (re: water quality, waste and storm water management, slope stability, etc.) (2)

-- How can we identify technical and financial resources that might be immediately available for planning and implementation of growth management ideas?

### **C. Model strategies and scenario planning.**

#### **What are alternatives/best models and practices for:**

-- Protecting watersheds, slopes, rivers and streams, farmlands, etc. unique to WNC? (7)

-- Financing and implementing the preservation of land that should not be in development?

-- Approaching planning comprehensively? (3)

-- Using expert advice and others’ experiences? (2)

-- Planning for sustainable growth as applied to walkability and transportation planning?

-- Balancing the need for financing effective planning and enforcement with the demand for low taxes? (4)

-- Effective implementation of planning proposals and regulations? (4)

(4) -- Planning, financing, and implementing infrastructure improvement to match growth demands?

-- Projecting how alternative regulatory scenarios might pan out? (4)

### **D. Harmonizing economic development, growth management, affordability.**

-- What are best strategies for harmonizing long-term economic development and long-term growth management strategies? How can we achieve a mutually beneficial working relationship between individual developers’ visions and growth management planning for the whole community? (2)

-- How can we capture more of the revenue pouring into our region from development?

-- How can we broaden affordability options in a regional economy that is pushing land and housing prices beyond the reach of many working people?

-- To what extent does marketing drive current trends? What is the role of communities in influencing the marketing message?

