Community Engagement Report

HOUSTON GALVESTON REGIONAL PLAN FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Addendum July 10, 2012

HOUSTON GALVESTON **REGIONAL PLAN**

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Section 1
Executive Summary

Section 1 - Executive Summary

The outreach activities of Phase IB - Community Meetings emphasized small-format community-oriented discussions and presentations with the intent of reaching residents who reflect the demographic diversity of the region and reducing specific geographic gaps in involvement identified by analysis of Phase IA participation patterns. Phase IB also continued activities from Phase IA, including the online and written survey and the MindMixer online forum. This Addendum to the Community Engagement Report presents the feedback received through the community meetings, surveys, and online engagement tools utilized in Phase IB.

Section 2 of this Addendum highlights the results of all surveys gathered in Phases IA and IB; Section 3 summarizes the feedback received through the community meetings held in Phase IB; Section 4 outlines the feedback received from the MindMixer online forum during Phases IA and IB; Section 5 sets forth the combined goal prioritization results from all outreach activities in Phases IA and IB; and Section 6 presents the conclusions and next steps.

Throughout Phases IA and IB of the engagement process:

- Participants have completed over 2,700 surveys;
- 245 users are engaging in an online dialogue on the ideas. ourregion.org online forum;
- Approximately 1,800 residents attended meetings or presentations on the plan, with approximately 1,075 residents participating in 41 targeted community meetings conducted during Phase IB

Highlights of the results of the community engagement process include:

Surveys

- During Phases IA and IB of the public engagement process, residents from throughout the 13-county region completed 2,774 surveys, representing over 250 zip codes.

- Approximately 45% of respondents reported that they currently live in suburban locations, while 31% said they would prefer to live in an urban area, 27.3% would prefer a rural area, 26.7% prefer suburban, and 15% would prefer to live in a coastal environment.

- The community issue most often cited as Most Important was traffic congestion, followed by crime and lack of public transportation. Respondents were asked to rank the same issues on a regional level, and the top two rankings were the same, with flood vulnerability ranking third at the regional level.

Figure 1 - Houston-Galveston 13-County Region
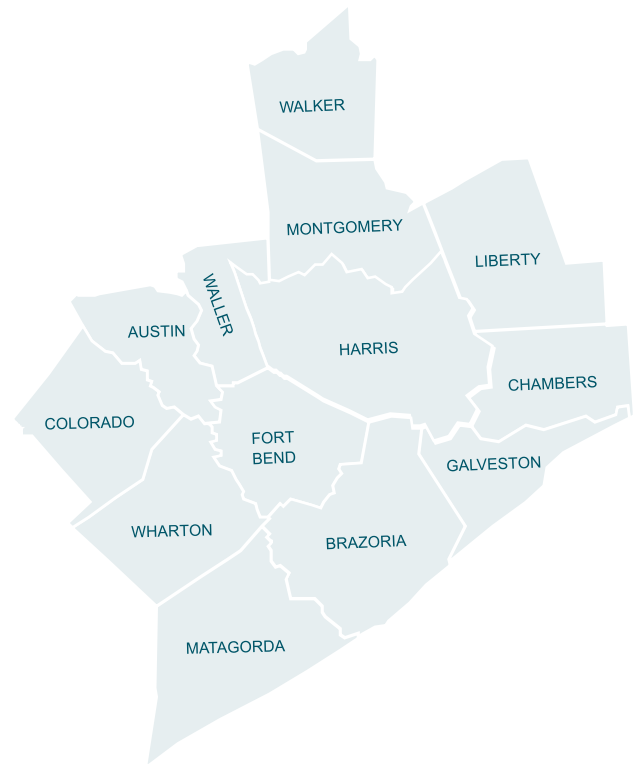
- Respondents were asked to evaluate 12 draft plan goals. Transportation choices, job opportunities, and clean and plentiful water, air, soil, and food had the highest scores.

- When asked to rank sustainability qualities, respondents showed the strongest preference for definitions that reflect using resources wisely, forward-thinking decision-making, and the ability to adapt and change.

- Respondents were asked to provide a sentence or sentences describing their hopes for their communities in 2040. The qualities most often cited were exceptional quality of life, a vibrant economy with job opportunities, improved public transit, clean air and water, and walkable, bikable communities.

- Analysis of written survey results begins in Section 2, Page 9.

Online Idea Forum (MindMixer)

Similar to the prioritization process conducted in the public meetings and surveys, the MindMixer results give the engagement team insight into participants' greatest concerns and priorities. In response to the question "What should the plan focus on?," participants ranked "Preserving ecosystems, working landscapes, parks and open spaces," "Safe communities with transportation," "Investments in infrastructure, housing and transportation," and "Efficiently using, reusing and conserving natural resources" the highest. Analysis of the online idea forum results begins in Section 4, Page 33.

Community Meetings

Based on the results of the demographic and geographic gap analysis of the public meeting attendance patterns, the engagement team conducted 41 community meetings in Phase IB, targeting the underserved and under-reached population groups. The analysis of community meeting participation reveals the following:

• Approximately 1,076 residents participated in 41 community meetings across the region.

• As appropriate based on target audience characteristics, the engagement team conducted meetings jointly in English and Spanish, Vietnamese, Korean, and Chinese.

• Participants were asked to rank the 12 draft people, places, and prosperity plan goals. 95.08% of community meeting participants chose "Importance of clean...water, air, soil, and food" as the Most Important goal and "Importance of education and training opportunities" as second Most Important.

• Community meeting participants considered "... transportation and infrastructure that can move goods…" to be of least importance overall, with 8.77% choosing this goal as either Less or Least Important. Community meeting

participants chose "Importance of having a range of housing choices" to be of second least importance, with 5.29% choosing this goal as either Less or Least Important.

• The community meeting analysis begins in Section 3, Page 21.

Combined Goal Results

The engagement team analyzed the combined draft goal prioritization results from all public meetings, community meetings, and online and written surveys, revealing the following:

• Participants chose "Importance of clean and plentiful water, air, soil and food" as Most Important overall with 50.79%, followed by "Importance of having job opportunities..." with 47.53% and "Importance of having transportation options..." with 47.14%.

• The combined goal results analysis begins in Section 5, Page 37.

Section 2
Surveys

Section 2 - Surveys

Survey Response

The total responses during Phases I and II of the public engagement process were as follows:

Survey / Collector	Number
Survey link	1,767
Paper Entry link	1,007
Total surveys	2,774

Of the 2,774 surveys, 2,150 (77.5%) respondents completed the bulk of the questions in the survey. This completion rate is typical for a survey of this type. The median time to complete the survey was 5 minutes.

Survey Respondent Information and Demographics

Q1 - Zip Code of Residence
The respondents to this survey were distributed across the entire H-GAC 13-county region. The complete list of zip codes of residences within the region is provided in Appendix A. 2,558 respondents opted to include a zip code, 202 zip codes were blank, and 14 were from out of the region.

Q2 - Residence in Incorporated or Unincorporated Area
In Question 2, the respondents were asked "Is your place of residence inside an incorporated city or town or is it in the county?" A majority of the respondents (73.2%) live in an incorporated city or town.

Q3 - Zip Code of Place of Employment
The work locations of respondents were distributed across the entire H-GAC 13-county region and beyond. Approximately 84% of respondents listed a work location. The complete list of work location zip codes within the region is located in Appendix A. 2,071 respondents provided a work zip code, 690 left the work zip code blank, and 13 respondents worked outside of the region.

Q4 - Type of Area for Residence
In Question 4, the respondents were asked, "How would you describe the area that you live in?" Almost one-half of the respondents stated that they lived in a suburban area, while one-fourth lived in an urban area. See Figure 2.

Figure 2 - **Type of Area for Residence**
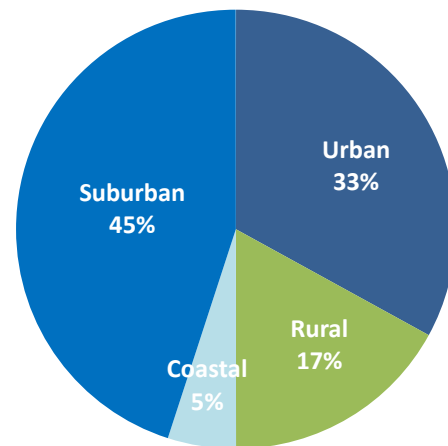
Demographics of Respondents Compared to H-GAC Regional Demographics

The survey respondents were asked questions about their personal and household characteristics to allow for analysis of the survey by these demographic parameters. In this section of the report, these demographic characteristics will be compared with the 2010 Census demographics for the H-GAC region to determine how the respondents differ from the overall regional population.

Q14 – Gender
In Question 14, participants were asked whether they were male or female. Of the respondents, 53.5% were female. In the H-GAC region, 50.2% of the residents are female.

Q15 - Age

In Question 15, the respondents were asked their age. Figure 3 illustrates the results of the survey in blue and the H-GAC region in red. The respondents to the survey were substantially older than the regional population as a whole, with a median age of approximately 48 years old compared to the regional median age of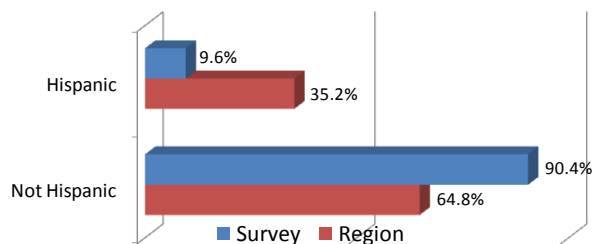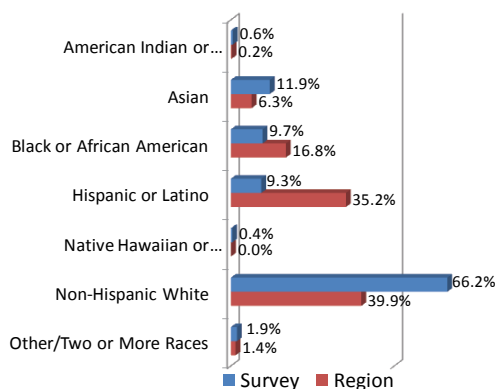 39. Survey respondents were weighted heavily to the over "45 and over" age group. The "45 and older" group represented 66.7% of the sample, while the regional proportion of "45+" is 43.0%.

Figure 4 - **Race and Ethnicity**

Figure 3 - **Age**

Figure 5 - **Race Categories**

Q16 - Household Income

In Question 16, respondents were asked, "What is your total household income for 2011?" Survey respondents had substantially higher incomes than households in the region. The calculated median household income of respondents was $84,000, substantially higher than the median for the H-GAC region ($53,598). Respondents were disproportionately in the "$75,000 and above" income groups, with 60.3% in this income bracket. In the region, only 34.2% of the households have incomes of "$75,000 and above."

Q17, Q18 - Race and Ethnicity

In Questions 17 and 18, respondents were asked about their ethnicity (Hispanic/Latino or Not Hispanic/Latino) and race. Of the respondents, 9.3% were Hispanic, whereas Hispanics comprise 35.2% of the total regional population. Of the racial groups, the "white" category is over-represented in the sample, comprising 66.2% of all respondents compared to 39.9% in the region. Black/African Americans were under-represented in the survey; however, those respondents identifying as Asian were over-represented in the survey, with 11.9% compared to 6.3% in the region. See Figure 4 and Figure 5.

Q19 - Educational Attainment

In Question 19, respondents were asked "What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed?" Consistent with the income disparity between the survey respondents and the general population in the region, the survey respondents were substantially more highly educated than regional residents overall. The median education for regional residents is "Associate Degree," while the median for the survey respondents is a "Bachelor's Degree." 72.7% of the survey respondents had a "Bachelor's Degree or above," compared to a regional college degree percentage of 27.8%.

Q20 - Vehicles in Household

In Question 20, respondents were asked, "How many vehicles are in your household?" Respondents reported more vehicles on average than the residents of the region. Overall, 75.7% of respondents have "2 or more" vehicles, compared with 59.0% of households in the region with "2 or more" vehicles. A calculated estimate for the average number of vehicles in respondent households is 2.3, while the average in the region is approximately 1.8.
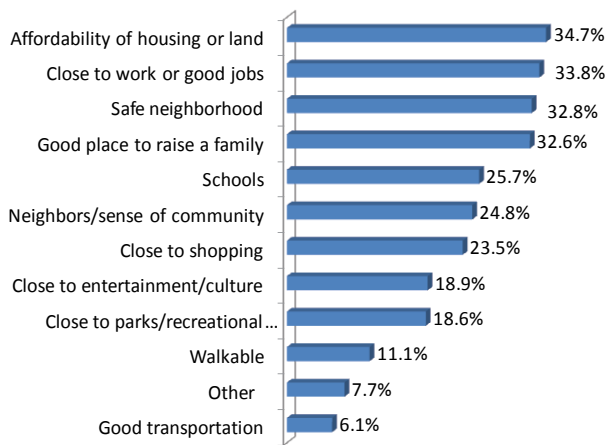
General View of Issues

Community Views

Q5 - Community Attributes

In Question 5, respondents were asked, "What do you like about the community where you live?" Respondents could choose up to three attributes that they liked about their community. Figure 6 represents the percentage of the total responses for each attribute selected. The top rated attribute was "Affordability of housing or land," followed closely by "Close to work or good jobs," "Safe neighborhood," and "Good place to raise a family." 7.7% of responses were categorized as "Other" and those verbatim responses are included in Appendix A.

Figure 6 - **Key Community Attributes**

Attribute	Percentage
Affordability of housing or land	34.7%
Close to work or good jobs	33.8%
Safe neighborhood	32.8%
Good place to raise a family	32.6%
Schools	25.7%
Neighbors/sense of community	24.8%
Close to shopping	23.5%
Close to entertainment/culture	18.9%
Close to parks/recreational …	18.6%
Walkable	11.1%
Other	7.7%
Good transportation	6.1%

Q6 - Preference for Residence Location

In Question 6, respondents were asked what location/type of community they would live in if they could live anywhere. See Figure 7. The top choice was "Urban," followed by "Rural" and "Suburban." "Coastal" was least preferred.

Figure 7 - **Preference for Residence Location**
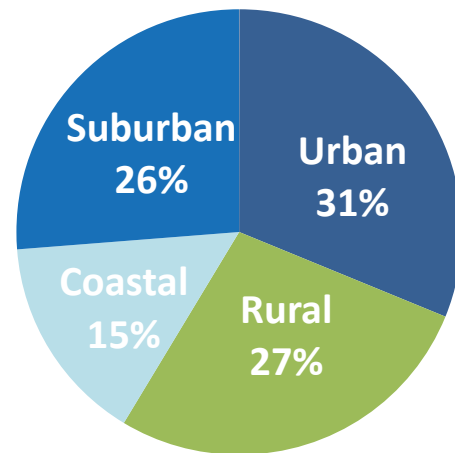
Table 1 cross-tabulates respondents' current and preferred residential locations. In every case the majority of respondents prefer their current location. Rural residents demonstrated the strongest preference for their current location, with 74.2% preferring to remain in a rural location. Suburbanites are least satisfied with their current location.

Table 1 - **Respondents' Current and Preferred Residential Locations**

Currently Live	Would Prefer to live			
Total	Coastal	Rural	Suburban	Urban
Coastal 5.3%	67.2%	19.1%	5.3%	8.4%
Rural 17.0%	10.4%	74.2%	10.2%	5.2%
Suburban 44.6%	14.9%	22.0%	46.2%	17.0%
Urban 33.1%	9.1%	11.5%	12.2%	67.2%

Q7 - Major Community Issues

In Question 7, respondents were asked, "What are the major issues in the community where you live?" Respondents were asked to rate the level of each item's importance on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being the least important and 5 the most important. Figure 8 presents the average rating for each of the issues. "Traffic congestion" was overall most important with a 3.14 average rating, just above a mid-point rating of 3. Crime was the next highest rated issue of importance at 3.12.

Figure 8 - **Major Issues in the Community**

Q9 - Traffic Congestion Solutions

In Question 9, those who rated "Traffic congestion" as an important issue were asked, "If you gave traffic congestion a high level of importance on either of the last two questions, what do you think are the best possible solutions?" The offered solutions were also rated on a scale of 1 to 5 for importance. "More public transportation" leads the list of traffic congestion solutions with a score of 3.75, followed closely by "Operational improvements...." See Figure 9.

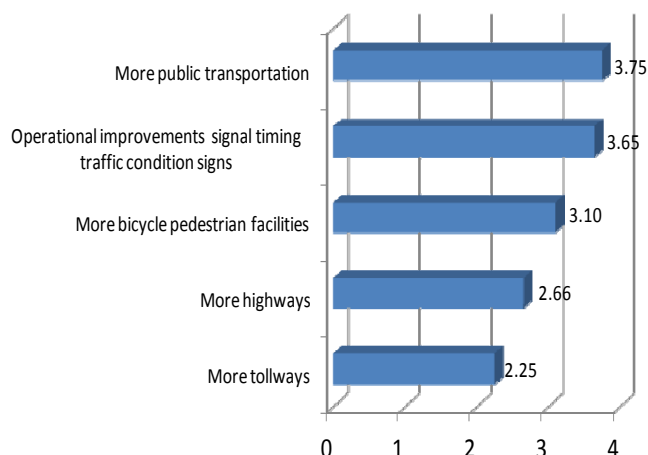## Figure 9 - **Traffic Congestion Solutions**

Regional Views

Q8 - Major Regional Issues

In Question 8 respondents were asked, "What are the major issues for the region overall?" Respondents rated the issue on an scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being the least important and 5 most important. In general, respondents rated each item as more important on a regional scale than on a community level. "Traffic congestion" was rated more important (3.77) than at a community level (3.14). The top two rated issues were the same at the regional and community level. "Poor air quality" was fourth in the regional importance list, up from seventh in the community rankings. Full results and "Other" verbatim responses are included in Appendix A.

Q11 - Economic Development Opportunities

In Question 11, the respondents were asked, "What kinds of opportunities do you think are most important for people to be part of positive economic development in the future?" Survey takers could select up to three items. The results are shown in Figure 10. The numbers in the chart are the percentages of total responses that selected that item. For example, over one third of respondents selected "Workforce training for adults," "K-12 education," and "Support for locally owned businesses."

Figure 10 - **Positive Economic Development Opportunities**

Workforce training for adults	35.1%
K-12 education	34.5%
Support for locally-owned businesses	33.1%
Support for start-up businesses	23.3%
Access to technology	21.6%
4 Year college education	20.2%
Community college education	19.4%
Mentoring for young adults	18.3%
Early childhood Pre K education	14.0%
More help for unemployed people	9.9%

Figure 11 - **Priorities for the Regional Plan**

|	
Transportation choices including walking…	3.84
Job opportunities that support good quality…	3.82
Clean and plentiful water air soil and food	3.76
Coordinated investments in infrastructure …	3.70
Efficient use reuse and conservation of…	3.56
Education and training opportunities	3.52
Resilient adaptable and diverse economy…	3.50
Ecosystems working landscapes parks open…	3.40
Physically and mentally healthy lifestyles	3.38
The ability to move goods and connect the…	3.29
Range of quality housing choices	3.06
Embracing multicultural historical and…	3.04

Goals and Sustainability

Q10 - Plan Priorities

In question 10, respondents were asked, "What areas do you think the regional plan should focus most on?" Respondents were asked to rate the level of each item's importance on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being the least important and 5 the most important. The list below contains the complete statements of the priority options offered in the survey in the order that they were presented to the respondent.

- Education and training opportunities
- Transportation choices, including walking, biking, transit, and driving
- Clean and plentiful water, air, soil, and food
- Physically and mentally healthy lifestyles
- Coordinated investments in infrastructure, housing, and transportation
- Ecosystems, working landscapes, parks, open spaces
- Range of quality housing choices
- Efficient use, reuse and conservation of natural resources
- Resilient, adaptable, and diverse economy and skilled workforce
- Job opportunities that support good quality of life
- The ability to move goods and connect the region to the global marketplace
- Embracing multicultural, historical, and natural assets

Figure 11 presents the average rating for each of the stated priority options. Due to space limitations, some of the answers were truncated.
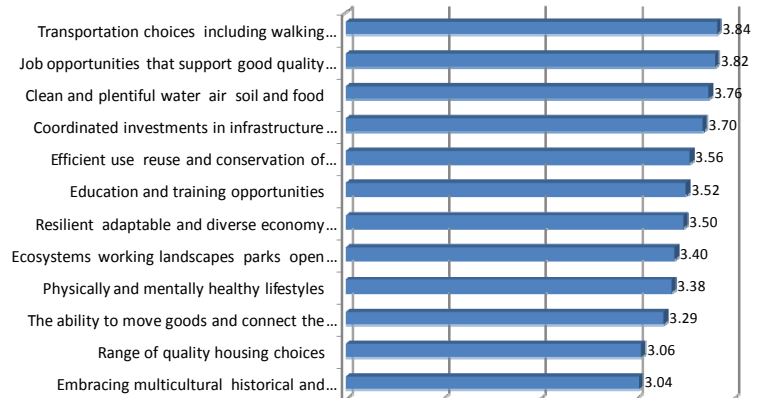
"Our community will continue to grow and prosper while maintaining a family-oriented environment."

- Survey Respondent's Vision

Q10 - Cross-tabulations

Q10 - What areas do you think the regional plan should focus most on?
Cross tabulated with Q4, "How would you describe the area that you live in?" Those persons living in Coastal communities are somewhat more concerned about "Clean and plentiful water air, soil, and food." "Transportation choices..." seem to be the highest priority of Suburban and Urban residents. Rural residents are more focused on "Job opportunities.…" On average, Urban residents gave higher priority rankings than residents of other community types. See Table 2.

Sustainability-- "Balance between adaptability & preservation."
- Public Meeting Participant

Table 2 - Desired Regional Plan Focus by Type of Community

Q10 - Plan Priorities	Coastal	Rural	Suburban	Urban	Total
Education and training opportunities	3.56	3.70	3.36	3.65	3.52
Transportation choices including walking biking transit and driving	3.10	3.31	3.92	4.12	3.84
Clean and plentiful water air soil and food	4.07	3.54	3.73	3.85	3.75
Physically and mentally healthy lifestyles	3.38	3.25	3.23	3.63	3.37
Coordinated investments in infrastructure housing and transportation	3.51	3.35	3.70	3.91	3.70
Ecosystems working landscapes parks open spaces	3.37	2.99	3.37	3.67	3.40
Range of quality housing choices	2.87	3.07	2.98	3.21	3.06
Efficient use reuse and conservation of natural resources	3.80	3.47	3.48	3.68	3.56
Resilient adaptable and diverse economy and skilled workforce	3.71	3.55	3.48	3.48	3.50
Job opportunities that support good quality of life	3.99	3.92	3.79	3.80	3.82
The ability to move goods and connect the region to the global marketplace	3.14	3.17	3.36	3.28	3.29
Embracing multicultural historical and natural assets	3.16	2.82	2.90	3.31	3.03

Q4 - Type of Community - Average Scores

Q10 - What areas do you think the regional plan should focus most on?

Cross tabulated with Q16, "What is your total household income for 2011?" The "No response" column in Table 3 represents those persons who answered Q10 but did not provide their income in Q16. The lowest income group and the highest groups chose on "Transportation choices..." and the middle income groups rated "Job opportunities..." as the highest priority.

> "I hope my community will allow growth in jobs, a broad range of housing choices and improved public transportation. Persons of all backgrounds and income levels should be able to live here."
>
> - Survey Respondent's Vision

Table 3 - Desired Regional Plan Focus by Income

Q10 - Plan Priorities	Q16 - 2011 Household Income								
	Less than $25,000	$25,000-$49,999	$50,000-$74,999	$75,000-$99,999	$100,000-$124,999	$125,000-$149,999	$150,000 or more	No Response	Total
Education and training opportunities	3.52	3.31	3.28	3.82	3.70	3.48	4.04	3.40	3.53
Transportation choices including walking biking transit and driving	3.96	3.89	3.84	3.85	3.81	3.90	4.03	3.67	3.84
Clean and plentiful water air soil and food	3.76	3.55	3.57	3.92	3.87	3.78	3.88	3.78	3.76
Physically and mentally healthy lifestyles	3.08	3.34	3.21	3.59	3.51	3.49	3.96	3.25	3.38
Coordinated investments in infrastructure housing and transportation	3.77	3.78	3.75	3.59	3.80	3.74	3.75	3.51	3.71
Ecosystems working landscapes parks open spaces	3.41	3.44	3.40	3.47	3.41	3.42	3.46	3.26	3.40
Range of quality housing choices	3.00	3.00	2.90	3.32	3.22	3.09	3.48	2.84	3.07
Efficient use reuse and conservation of natural resources	3.56	3.50	3.41	3.86	3.65	3.54	3.57	3.46	3.56
Resilient adaptable and diverse economy and skilled workforce	3.40	3.60	3.36	3.63	3.71	3.53	3.55	3.41	3.51
Job opportunities that support good quality of life	3.65	3.92	3.70	3.95	3.97	3.90	4.02	3.76	3.83
The ability to move goods and connect the region to the global marketplace	3.24	3.37	3.41	3.11	3.30	3.30	3.33	3.29	3.29
Embracing multicultural historical and natural assets	298	2.80	2.91	3.28	3.31	2.96	3.39	2.83	3.04

Q10 - What areas do you think the regional plan should focus most on?

Cross tabulated with Q18, "What is your total household income for 2011?" The "No response" column in Table 4 represents those persons who answered Q10 but did not provide their ethnicity and race in Q17 and Q18. "Asians," "Hispanics," "Non-Hispanic Whites" and those of "Two or more races" chose "Transportation choises…." "Black/African American" respondents chose "Education and training…" as the most important, while "American Indian or Alaskan Natives" and "Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander" respondents rated "Job opportunities…" as the highest priority.

Sustainability-- "Being a good steward."

- Public Meeting Participant

Table 4 - **Desired Regional Plan Focus Race/Ethnicity**

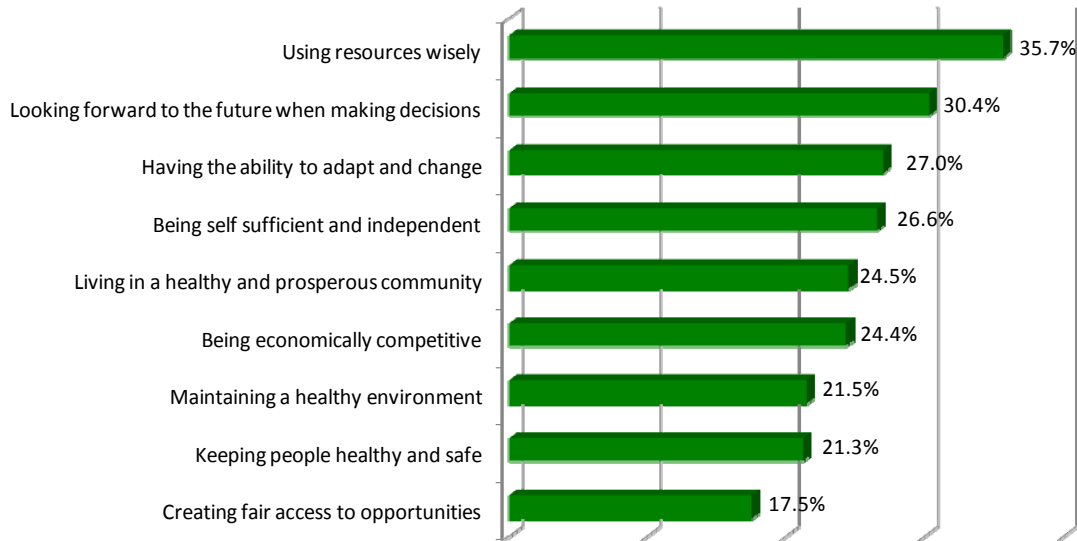| Q10 - Plan Priorities	Q17 - Do you consider yourself to be Hispanic/Latino? And Q18 Select one or more of the following racial categories to describe yourself(These categories separated Hispanic from the racial groups}								
	American Indian or Native	Asian	Black or African American	Hispanic or Latino	Native Hawaiian or Islander	Non-Hispanic White	Two or more Races	No Response	Total
Education and training opportunities	3.11	3.83	4.26	3.76	3.25	3.38	3.47	3.41	3.52
Transportation choices including walking biking transit and driving	3.70	4.09	4.01	4.13	4.25	3.82	4.18	3.50	3.84
Clean and plentiful water air soil and food	2.80	3.83	3.79	3.99	3.88	3.75	3.94	3.61	3.76
Physically and mentally healthy lifestyles	2.44	3.56	3.85	3.69	3.88	3.32	3.47	3.08	3.38
Coordinated investments in infrastructure housing and transportation	3.44	3.89	3.94	3.82	4.75	3.69	3.94	3.39	3.70
Ecosystems working landscapes parks open spaces	2.89	3.66	3.42	3.48	3.50	3.41	3.59	3.19	3.40
Range of quality housing choices	3.11	3.18	3.68	3.38	3.25	3.00	2.81	2.76	3.06
Efficient use reuse and conservation of natural resources	3.11	3.82	3.49	3.58	3.25	3.59	3.88	3.31	3.56
Resilient adaptable and diverse economy and skilled workforce	3.45	3.74	3.58	4.00	3.51	3.50	3.30	3.50	3.45
Job opportunities that support good quality of life	4.00	3.81	4.18	3.93	4.50	3.79	3.94	3.65	3.82
The ability to move goods and connect the region to the global marketplace	3.25	3.22	3.42	3.47	3.63	3.27	3.26	3.26	3.29
Embracing multicultural historical and natural assets	2.63	3.51	3.57	3.35	3.75	2.92	3.22	2,80	3.04

Sustainability Defined

Q12 - Sustainability Qualities

In Question 12, the respondents were asked, "Sustainability has many different qualities. Which do you think are the most important?" Respondents could choose up to three of the offered statements; therefore, the total response percentages add to more than 100%. Figure 12 illustrates the percentage of respondents selecting one of the statements. More than one out of every three participants mentioned "Using resources wisely" as an important quality of sustainability. The next most mentioned qualities were: "Looking forward…," "Having the ability to adapt and change," and "Being self-sufficient…." "Creating fair access to opportunities" was the least mentioned quality of sustainability, with 17.5%. Respondents were offered the opportunity to add another statement. The "Other" sustainability verbatim responses are presented in Appendix A.

Figure 12 - **Most Important Sustainability Qualities**

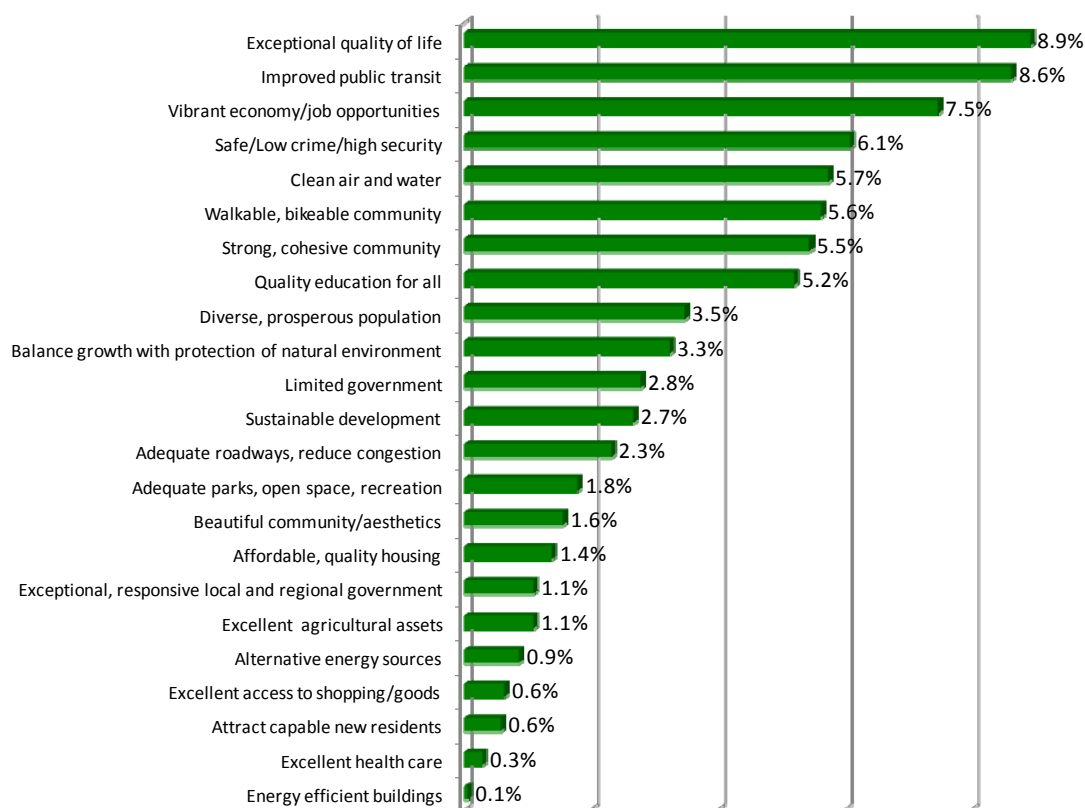|	
Using resources wisely	35.7%
Looking forward to the future when making decisions	30.4%
Having the ability to adapt and change	27.0%
Being self sufficient and independent	26.6%
Living in a healthy and prosperous community	24.5%
Being economically competitive	24.4%
Maintaining a healthy environment	21.5%
Keeping people healthy and safe	21.3%
Creating fair access to opportunities	17.5%

Q13- Vision Statement

In Question 13, respondents were asked to provide an open ended response to, "Please share with us your hope for your community 30 years from now." There were 1,723 responses to this question (62.1% of the total survey responses). For analysis purposes, these statements were coded to the categories shown in Figure 13.

Figure 13 illustrates the percentages of the open-ended questions that were related to each of the selected categories. In this case, the average comment included more than two distinct categories. Rather than double count those statements, 308 of those with relevant comments were coded to an "other" category, which constituted 17.9% of the total responses. Some of the comments that could not be coded to the categories were placed in a "miscellaneous" category. In total 86 responses (5.0%) fit into the "miscellaneous" category.

Because the coded categories only summarize the thoughts contained in the responses to Question 13, it is important to review the verbatim responses to Question 13, included in Appendix A.

Figure 13 - Vision Statement Categories

Category	Percentage
Exceptional quality of life	8.9%
Improved public transit	8.6%
Vibrant economy/job opportunities	7.5%
Safe/Low crime/high security	6.1%
Clean air and water	5.7%
Walkable, bikeable community	5.6%
Strong, cohesive community	5.5%
Quality education for all	5.2%
Diverse, prosperous population	3.5%
Balance growth with protection of natural environment	3.3%
Limited government	2.8%
Sustainable development	2.7%
Adequate roadways, reduce congestion	2.3%
Adequate parks, open space, recreation	1.8%
Beautiful community/aesthetics	1.6%
Affordable, quality housing	1.4%
Exceptional, responsive local and regional government	1.1%
Excellent agricultural assets	1.1%
Alternative energy sources	0.9%
Excellent access to shopping/goods	0.6%
Attract capable new residents	0.6%
Excellent health care	0.3%
Energy efficient buildings	0.1%

Section 3
Community Meetings

Section 3 - Community Meetings

Community Meeting Purpose

The central purpose of the community meetings was to create a space that was comfortable and safe, thus inviting meaningful dialogue with members of the community who might not otherwise participate in more traditional meeting formats. A secondary goal of these supplementary meetings was to fill gaps in geographic and demographic coverage resulting from the large-format meeting schedule. The team used quantitative, mapping, and qualitative analysis to assess deficiencies in prior meeting coverage and inform the scheduling of subsequent community meeting sessions.

In order to reach those populations under-represented in the public meeting process based on demographic characteristics, the engagement team targeted the underserved population groups listed below:

- Racial/ethnic minority communities
- International communities
- Religious minorities
- Seniors
- College students
- Disabled/Mobility impaired
- Low income/public housing residents
- Homeless
- Second Shift Workers

Additionally, to achieve geographic balance among urban, suburban, and rural residents, the project team identified and reached out to geographic-based populations who were not previously engaged in the process.

Outreach Techniques

Language, trust issues, and distinct cultural views can all pose barriers to meaningful minority participation in traditional engagement activities; therefore, the engagement team made every effort to anticipate and overcome such cultural boundaries by utilizing a multi-dimensional approach to notification and messaging—a flexible and tailored approach that reflects the varied perspectives and backgrounds of the targeted populations. As appropriate based on the target audience, the engagement team conducted meetings jointly in English and Spanish, Korean, Vietnamese, and Chinese.

The primary strategy to connect with the underserved communities was to leverage existing venues and meetings as
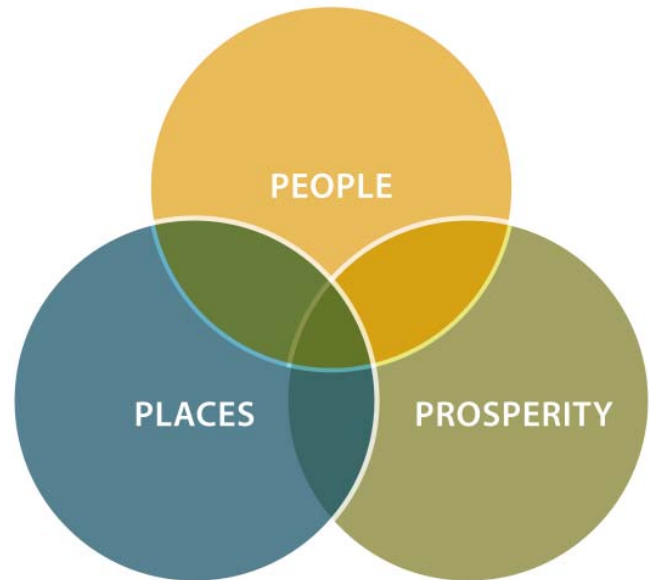
a vehicle for communication and interaction. The team used immersion opportunities at sites with high traffic patterns, such as larger housing developments, health units, or other service-oriented centers to distribute information, explain the plan, and invite feedback. The team also participated in the regularly scheduled meetings of neighborhood associations, area apartment complexes, and the City of Houston Super Neighborhoods. Targeted and geographic community meetings were intended to:

- Increase participation of traditionally underserved residents within the region
- Capture a greater diversity of ideas
- Enhance the regional diversity of participants
- Express plan themes and concepts in ways that are relatable to residents from multicultural backgrounds or lower educational or income levels
- Generate ongoing interest in the plan and related community-building initiatives

Community meetings were not intended to depart significantly in content from the large-format meetings, but instead differ in the method and scope of notification used. While the large-format meetings were advertised broadly to maximize attendance across all demographic groups and areas, the outreach for community meetings draws more from tailored strategies, including face-to-face interactions, canvassing, existing neighborhood networks,

and selected media outlets, to enhance participation by the targeted group.

To reach and fully engage the underserved populations in the region, the engagement team sought to connect their interests, particularly the well-being of their families, to the planning process. To reinforce this theme, the team crafted messages in the ethnic media that emphasized:

*   Building a better life for your family now and in the future
*   Building a better community that provides opportunities for you and your family

Community Meeting Content

The engagement team developed a modular approach reorganizing core elements of the traditional public meeting content into a series of options that could be used flexibly to meet the needs of target audiences, as well as accommodate the time and technological constraints of the each location. The intent of all modules was to produce general feedback on the vision and concerns of the community through open dialogue and to identify a sense of priority relative to the broad draft themes and goals of the plan. Team members coordinated with each targeted community representative to determine the appropriate format and content module based on the group's interests and backgrounds, as well as available time for audience interaction. In general modules followed one of the following formats:

*   15 to 20 minute format appropriate for a short agenda item at an existing meeting – focused on facilitator overview of process, steps, schedule, and participation opportunities and distribution of existing background materials, including fact sheet with draft goals and surveys
*   30 minute format appropriate for extended agenda item at an existing meeting – focused on facilitator overview of process, steps, schedule, and participation opportunities and distribution of existing background materials, including fact sheet with draft goals and surveys; also featured a short interactive exercise using printed materials in which participants identify the most important draft goals under the broad categories of people, places, and prosperity and discuss additional goals

*   60 minute format appropriate for a stand-alone meeting – focused on facilitator overview of process, steps, schedule, and participation opportunities and distribution of existing

*   background materials, including fact sheet with draft goals and surveys; also featured a more in depth interactive exercise using either the wireless audience response technology or printed materials to identify the most important draft goals and to discuss additional goals

*   60 minute format specifically designed for Limited English Proficiency/immigrant and refugee populations—small group dialogue in which a facilitator uses slides or printed handouts to engage the audience

"All kids will have access to a good education."

- Survey Respondent's Vision

Community Meeting Overview

In an effort to effectively engage the under-reached populations discerned through the gap analysis contained in the Community Engagement Report, the engagement team conducted 28 targeted audience meetings during Phase IB of the engagement process. Additionally, Regional Partner members conducted another 13 geographically targeted meetings. Table 5 outlines the community meeting locations, type, and attendance/participation numbers.

In total, the engagement team reached approximately 1,076 residents through the community meeting activities. Figure 14 illustrates the geographic scope of participating residents throughout Phases IA and IB and includes the zip codes of survey participants, public meeting attendees, community meeting attendees, and MindMixer participants.

Overall Community Meeting Results

As with the public meetings held throughout the region, community meeting participants had the opportunity to prioritize the 12 people, places, and prosperity draft goals, as allowed by time and agenda constraints. The engagement team also distributed and collected written surveys at community meetings.

As shown in Table 6, 95.08% of community meeting attendees participating in the goal prioritization activity chose "Importance of clean…water, air, soil, and food" as the Most Important goal. Goal prioritization participants chose "Importance of education and training opportunities" as second Most Important and "Importance of having job opportunities…" as third Most Important. Phase IA public meeting prioritization participants also chose "Importance of clean and plentiful water, air, soil, and food" as the Most Important goal overall, with 69.13%; however, Phase IA public meeting prioritization participants chose "Importance of having job opportunities…" as second Most Important, with 58% and "Importance of education and training opportunities" as third Most Important.

Community meeting prioritization participants considered "…transportation and infrastructure that can move goods…" to be of relatively less importance overall, with 8.77% choosing this goal as either Less or Least Important. 5.29% of community participants

chose "Importance of having a range of housing choices" as either Less or Least Important. Similarly, public meeting prioritization participants also ranked "…transportation and infrastructure that can move goods…" as being less important overall, with 25.08% ranking this goal as either Less or Least Important. Likewise, Phase IA public meeting prioritization participants also chose "Importance of having a range of housing choices" as second least important overall, with 24.17% of participants choosing this goal as either Less or Least Important.

In addition to the people, places, and prosperity draft goal questions, the engagement team also asked community meeting prioritization participants in eight targeted sessions to rank the following seven transportation goals:

- How important to your community are more pedestrian/bicycle facilities?
- How important to your community are more toll roads?
- How important to your community are more METRO HOT lanes?
- How important to your community is more public transportation, such as buses, rail, van pools, shuttle buses?
- How important to your community are more highways?
- How important to your community are more surface streets?
- How important to your community are operational improvements, such as the timing of traffic signals and traffic signs?

Of the transportation draft goals, community meeting prioritization participants chose "Importance of more public transportation, such as buses, rail, van pools, [and/or] shuttle buses" as Most Important overall, with 73.40%. Participants chose "Importance of more pedestrian/bicycle facilities" as second Most Important, with 50.55%, followed by "Importance of more surface streets" with 49.46% and "Importance of operational improvements, such as the timing of traffic signals and traffic signs" with 49.45%. Participants chose "Importance of more toll roads" as Least Important overall, with 59.34%. See Table 7.

Table 5 - **Community Meetings**

Date	Organization	Location	Meeting Type*	Attendees	Goal Prioritization Participants	Survey Participants
March 13, 2012	Surfside City Council	Surfside Beach, TX	Geographic	25	N/A	N/A
March 13, 2012	Cleveland City Council	Cleveland, TX	Geographic	45	N/A	N/A
March 22, 2012	Fort Bend Optimist Club	Rosenberg, TX	Geographic	12	N/A	N/A
March 22, 2012	Latino Learning Center	Houston, TX	Targeted	20	18	15
March 27, 2012	Houston Renewable Energy	Houston, TX	Geographic	45	N/A	N/A
March 27, 2012	Alief Super Neighborhood	Houston, TX	Geographic	40	N/A	5
April 10, 2012	Third Ward Community Cloth Cooperative	Houston, TX	Targeted	52	49	N/A
April 11, 2012	Telephone Road Public Housing Development	Houston, TX	Targeted	16	20	N/A
April 12, 2012	Houston Commission on Disabilities	Houston, TX	Targeted	20	14	2
April 16, 2012	Kingwood Super Neighborhood	Kingwood, TX	Targeted	8	8	8
April 18, 2012	Clean Cities	Houston, TX	Targeted	35	N/A	N/A
April 19, 2012	University of Houston- Earth Day	Houston, TX	Targeted	22	N/A	N/A
April 21, 2012	Chinese Community Center	Houston, TX	Targeted	8	N/A	113[1]
April 23, 2012	Bahai Center	Houston, TX	Targeted	22	N/A	N/A
April 24 – May 3, 2012 4 total)	Boat People SOS	Houston, TX	Targeted	40	N/A	40[2]
April 24, 2012	Independence Heights GO Neighborhood	Houston, TX	Geographic	22	N/A	N/A
April 24, 2012	Hispanic Chamber of Commerce	Houston, TX	Targeted	12	12	10
April 24, 2012	Fort Bend County	Missouri City, TX	Geographic-Targeted	26	21	12
April 26, 2012	El Campo Rotary Club	El Campo, TX	Geographic	57	N/A	33
April 26, 2012	La Marque/Texas City	Texas City, TX	Targeted	8	8	7
April 26, 2012	Prairie View City Hall	Prairie View, TX	Targeted	22	21	14
May 1, 2012	Northside GO Neighborhood	Houston, TX	Geographic	45	N/A	N/A
May 1, 2012	Eagle Lake COC	Eagle Lake, TX	Geographic	10	N/A	1
May 1, 2012	Transition Houston	Houston, TX	Targeted	25	22	N/A
May 1, 2012	Gulf Coast Green	Houston, TX	Targeted	250	N/A	N/A

*Targeted meetings - demographically-targeted audience
 Geographic meetings- geographically-targeted audience

Table 5 Continued - **Community Meetings**

Date	Organization	Location	Meeting Type	Attendees	Goal Prioritization Participants	Survey Participants
May 2, 2012	HARC	Woodlands, TX	Targeted	12	11	N/A
May 2, 2012	Jewish Community Center	Houston, TX	General-Targeted	2	N/A	2
May 2, 2012	Dayton Lions Club	Dayton, TX	Geographic	13	N/A	N/A
May 3, 2012	Lindale Civic Club	Houston, TX	Targeted	6	N/A	6
May 3, 2012	Riverside/Lake Area COC	Riverside, TX	Geographic	21	N/A	10
May 3, 2012	Montgomery County Housing Authority	Conroe, TX	Targeted	9	9	8
May 5, 2012	India House	Houston, TX	Targeted	4	N/A	3
May 8, 2012	Glenda Dawson High School	Pearland, TX	Targeted	16	17	17
May 8, 2012	Weimar Lions Club	Weimar, TX	Geographic	28	N/A	4
May 9, 2012	Palacios Rotary Club	Palacios, TX	Geographic	21	N/A	12
May 9, 2012	Korean Community	Houston, TX	Targeted	28	N/A	22
May 9, 2012	Gulfton Apartment	Houston, TX	Targeted	18	N/A	15
May 10, 2012	Bolivar Peninsula Ladies Luncheon	Bolivar Peninsula, TX	Targeted	11	N/A	6
TOTAL				**1,076**	**230**	**365**

Note 1: Additional surveys were circulated and collected from the Chinese Community Center

Note 2: Surveys were completed as part of English as Second Language and Citizenship classes at the Vietnamese Community center.

Figure 14- **Phases IA and IB Participant Zip Codes**

Outreach by Participant Zip Code

Reached Zip Code

Unreached Zip Code
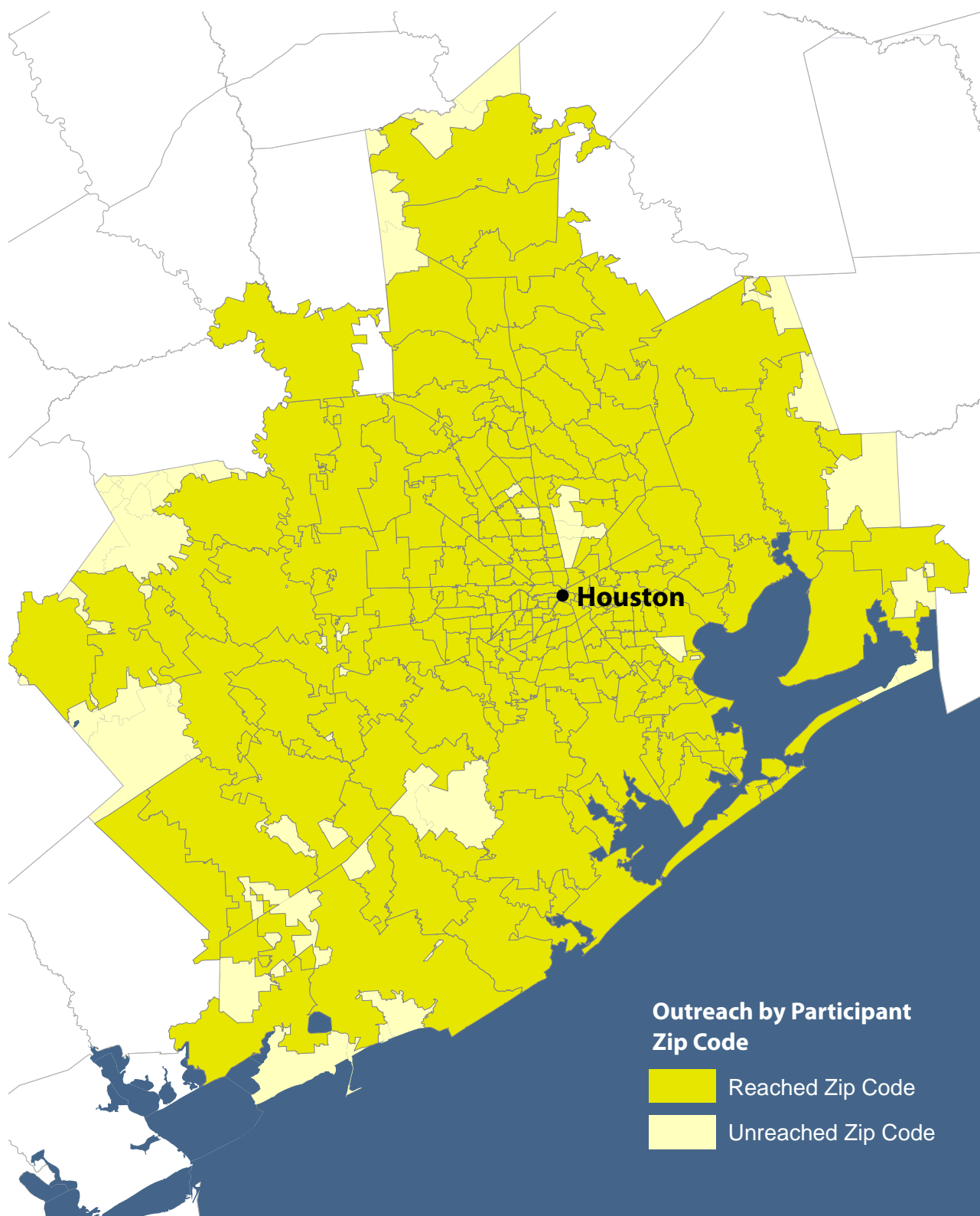
Community Meeting Discussions

Community meeting participants had the opportunity to engage in small group discussions if allowed by time constraints and other agenda items. If group discussion was not possible, participants received comment cards for submitting additional thoughts, issues, and concerns. The purpose of the group discussion portion of the community meetings was to give residents the opportunity to discuss the broader regional draft goals and also to discuss and share the issues and concerns unique to their respective communities. As with the public meeting goal discussions, engagement team members recorded participants' responses, including all desires, needs, and concerns.

Because of the targeted nature of the community meetings, discussions tended to emphasize specific needs and challenges relevant to each community, such as the need for a local post-office or library, quality and affordable grocery and clothing outlets, or affordable daycare. Discussions also emphasized broader transportation needs, such as expanded bus routes, more destination-oriented transit options, and road safety improvements, such as street lighting, pedestrian facilities, and general maintenance.

Community meeting discussions also emphasized the challenges unique to minority and international communities. For instance, community meeting participants across the 41 meetings expressed the need for broader informational resources for non-English speakers, language centers, adult education and training

opportunities, and improved access to capital for small minority businesses. And in accord with the feedback received during the Phase IA public meeting process, community meeting participants echoed the need for more services for seniors, more accessible and affordable healthcare, and improved education opportunities and services targeting youth.

Figure 15 illustrates the breakdown of community meeting discussions as they relate to the broader draft people, places, and prosperity goals and the following highlights the overall themes of the community meeting discussions:

- Access to affordable and quality community facilities and services—drugstores, banks, post-offices, libraries, healthcare, community centers, shelters, daycare, etc
- Neighborhood safety and cleanliness
- Improved education, youth recreation facilities, and accessible youth resources centers
- Senior mobility and healthcare services
- Transportation improvements- rail and/or bus transit options, plus roadway safety improvements and maintenance
- Opportunities for entrepreneurs and small businesses to connect with informational resources and capital
- Adult education and training opportunities
- Improved access to information and resources for non-English speakers, including availability of information in multiple languages
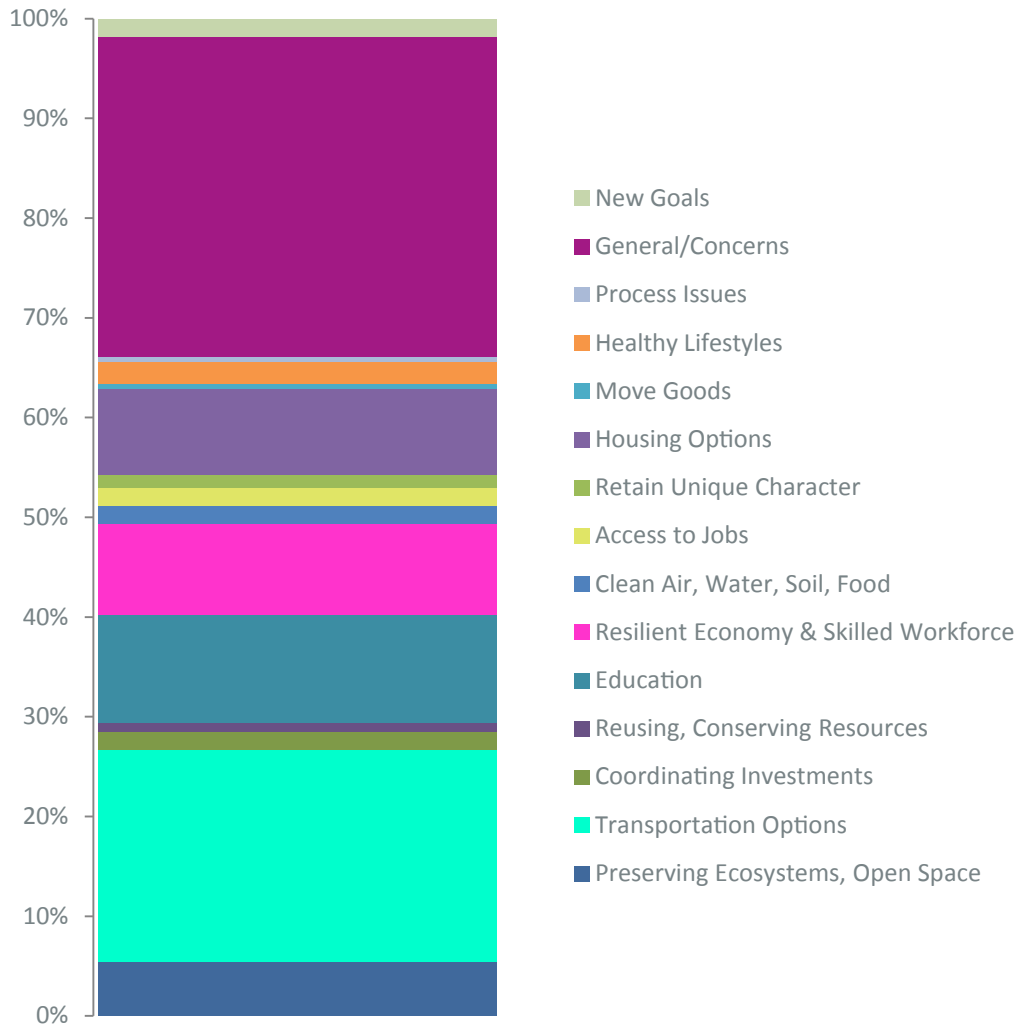
Table 6 - Community Meeting Draft Goal Rankings

People Goals	Most Important	More Important	Neutral	Less Important	Least Important
Importance of education and training opportunities	86.97%	9.02%	3.13%	0%	0.88%
Importance of having transportation options incl. walking, biking, transit, and driving	74.91%	19.26%	4.48%	1.35%	0.44%
Importance of clean and plentiful water, air, soil and food	95.08%	4.03%	0.45%	0.45%	0%
Importance of having physically and mentally healthy lifestyles	74.33%	20.29%	4.48%	0.90%	0%
Places Goals	**Most Important**	**More Important**	**Neutral**	**Less Important**	**Least Important**
Importance of coordinating infrastructure, housing and transportation investments	69.50%	19.46%	9.27%	0.44%	1.33%
Importance of preserving ecosystems, working landscapes, parks and open spaces.	68.06%	20.98%	8.33%	1.75%	0.88%
Importance of having a range of housing choices	65.66%	16.73%	12.31%	4.41%	0.88%
Importance of efficiently using, reusing, and conserving natural resources	78.35%	14.57%	4.22%	2.39%	0.47%
Prosperity Goals	**Most Important**	**More Important**	**Neutral**	**Less Important**	**Least Important**
Importance of having a skilled workforce and adaptable, resilient and diverse economy	71.04%	21.47%	6.18%	0.88%	0.44%
Importance of having job opportunities to support a good quality of life and financial stability	81.94%	12.62%	3.66%	0.89%	0.89%
Importance of having transportation and infrastructure that can move goods and connect to the region and global destinations	49.37%	27.61%	14.25%	8.31%	0.46%
Importance of community retaining its unique character by embracing its multicultural, historical and natural assets	65.03%	21.08%	9.25%	3.22%	1.41%

Table 7 - Community Meeting Transportation Draft Goal Rankings

Transportation Goals	Most Important	More Important	Neutral	Less Important	Least Important
Importance of operational improvements, such as the timing of traffic signals and traffic signs	49.45%	20.88%	14.29%	9.89%	5.49%
Importance of more pedestrian/bicycle facilities	50.55%	18.68%	15.38%	8.79%	6.59%
Importance of more toll roads	9.89%	6.59%	10.99%	13.19%	59.34%
Importance of more METRO HOT lanes	17.44%	15.12%	23.26%	15.12%	29.07%
Importance of more public transportation, such as buses, rail, van pools, shuttle buses	73.40%	7.45%	11.70%	4.26%	3.19%
Importance of more highways	21.28%	13.83%	19.15%	14.89%	30.85%
Importance of more surface streets	49.46%	7.53%	17.20%	7.53%	18.28%

Figure 14- **Community Meeting Draft Goal Discussions by Topic**

Legend (top to bottom):
- New Goals
- General/Concerns
- Process Issues
- Healthy Lifestyles
- Move Goods
- Housing Options
- Retain Unique Character
- Access to Jobs
- Clean Air, Water, Soil, Food
- Resilient Economy & Skilled Workforce
- Education
- Reusing, Conserving Resources
- Coordinating Investments
- Transportation Options
- Preserving Ecosystems, Open Space

Section 4
MindMixer Results

Section 4 - MindMixer

Thus far in the engagement process, approximately 245 unique users have accessed and participated in the MindMixer forum from approximatley 123 zip codes throughout the Houston-Galveston region. As of July 6, 2012, 55% of MindMixer participants are women, 45% are men, and the average participant age is 44. MindMixer participants proposed 125 new ideas and 397 comments. See Appendix D for a complete MindMixer user report, user overview, and idea report.

The engagement team highlighted the draft goal statements on the MindMixer forum and, using the "second" feature, invited participants to rank the goals. Similar to the goal prioritization process conducted in the public meetings using TurningPoint, the ranked results give the engagement team insight into participants' greatest concerns and priorities. In response to the question "What should the plan focus on?" participants responded as follows:

- Ecosystems, working landscapes, parks and open spaces – **32 seconds**
- Safe communities with transportation choices – **27 seconds**
- Investments in infrastructure, housing, and transportation – **26 seconds**
- Efficiently using, reusing and conserving natural resources – **23 seconds**
- Resilient economy and a skilled workforce – **15 seconds**
- Education and training opportunities – **13 seconds**
- Clean and plentiful water, air, soil and food – **13 seconds**
- Access to good job opportunities – **10 seconds**
- Multicultural, historical and natural assets – **6 seconds**
- Range of quality housing choices – **5 seconds**
- Ability to move goods and connect the region to the world – **5 seconds**
- Ability to live physically and mentally healthy lifestyles—**4 seconds**

In response to the question "What are the major issues where you live?" participants proposed the following local issues:

- Lack of land use planning
- Lack of good alternative transportation
- No Town Square: lack of places for all ages to hang out
- Poorly maintained infrastructure
- Retrofit suburban strip shopping centers
- Localize infill to our neighborhood, reducing auto dependency
- Pollution
- Education and training
- Lack of job opportunities
- Code violations and vacant properties
- Congestion reduction
- Scooters
- Equal access to healthy food
- Education and training
- More career vocational class in high school
- Train noise
- Lack of job opportunities
- Dangers of sustainable development
- Visioning as a start to land use planning
- More reliable funding sources
- The future
- Living in Westbury
- Extend the Hwy. 146 Baytown Freeway-18-wheeler Traffic Nightmare
- Industrial encouragement in residential areas
- Avoiding suburban-style development in the city
- Mitigating street flooding
- Need traffic calming measures and walkability/bikeability

In response to the question "What are the major issues of this region?" participants proposed the following regional issues:

- Transportation
- Transit
- Preserve the countryside
- Right size governance
- Climate change, drought, heat
- The built environment is not designed for people, but for cars

- Funding for infrastructure
- A major issue is that Harris County hasn't bought in yet
- Sustainable buildings
- Smart meters
- Poverty, homelessness, neighborhood decline
- Maintenance of regional mobility
- "Sustainable Development" aka United Nations Agenda 21
- Move focus from Deed Restrictions to Neighborhood Plans
- Multimode transportation
- Further improve air quality
- More walk/bike/transit to relieve/avoid congestion & pollution
- No more toll roads
- Reduce zoning and eminent domain
- Poverty
- Transportation, drainage, and recreation

In response to the question "How would you define sustainability?" participants proposed the following definitions:

- Minimalist, practical, diverse
- Ways of thinking
- Replacing materialism and waste with contentment
- Walking is a human right
- Self-sufficient sustainability
- One community
- Each leaves the Earth better for passing through
- The marriage of our ecosystem with development
- Brundtland definition
- Survival, health, happiness, prosperity
- W. McDonough's definition
- Our ability to sustain - to survive, to thrive, to prosper
- I want to be able to refuel a natural gas vehicle
- Avoiding the boom and bust cycle
- Stopping unsustainable games and schemes
- Livable Centers promote sustainable communities
- Clean air/water, local food, minimal waste, green transportation
- Sustainability is government intrusion
- Avoid Utopia-encourage innovation
- Conservative underpinnings of sustainability
- Sustainable works to today to avoid problems tomorrow
- Caring, supporting and remembering to improve life for everyone!

- Conservative underpinnings of sustainability
- Sustainable works to today to avoid problems tomorrow
- Caring, supporting and remembering to improve life for everyone!
- A healthy life for all, regardless of income
- Forget income to remember that everyone matters
- The step by step abolition of property rights
- Let's grow together as individuals
- Healthy foods in grocery stores of all areas
- Remember today

In response to the question "What is your hope for your community 30 years from now?" participants proposed the following ideas:

- Long term solution to water supply
- Visitors should get a better visual impression of area
- Chemical plant future
- In 30 years, I want there to be places for outdoor recreation
- Every street or road will be a Complete Street candidate
- Easier Access to Regional Mass Transportation
- Elderly people won't have to leave their homes
- Provision for alternative fuel vehicles
- Beauty, community-scale business, broadband, well families
- I want a place [for] bike riding & walking with my grandkids
- Livable centers
- Under 18
- Energy descent action plan: made & in use
- Government is smaller and communities are self-governing
- Larger houses, more lanes on roads. Less urbanization
- Full use live-workspaces
- New vision for the Houston region
- Encourage efficiency
- Transportation choice

Section 5
Combined Goal Results

Section 5 - Combined Goal Results

Table 8 outlines the combined draft goal prioritization results from all public meetings, community meetings, and online and written surveys--a total of 3,609 responses overall. Participants chose "Importance of clean and plentiful water, air, soil and food" as Most Important overall with 50.79%, followed by "Importance of having job opportunities..." with 47.53% and "Importance of having transportation options..." with 47.14%. Figure 16 also illustrates the combined prioritization results for each draft goal.

A majority of participants selected either Most Important or More Important for each of the draft goals, with the exception of "Importance of having a range of housing choices" and "Importance of community retaining its unique character...." When Most Important and More Important percentages are

combined, "Importance of having job opportunities..." ranks the highest with 71.90%, followed closely by "Importance of clean and plentiful water, air, soil and food" with 71.09%.

"Importance of community retaining its unique character..." received the highest Least Important ranking with 19.74% and "Importance of having a range of housing choices" received the second highest Least Important ranking with 17.26%.

The combined prioritization results from all outreach activities are similar to the prioritization results collected individually from the public meetings, community meetings, and surveys. Table 9 outlines the top three Most Important draft goals chosen by participants from each outreach activity. "Importance of

Table 8 - Combined Goal Prioritization Results, Public Meetings, Community Meetings, + Surveys

People Goals	Most Important	More Important	Neutral	Less Important	Least Important
Importance of education and training opportunities	42.94%	21.18%	16.98%	7.85%	11.06%
Importance of having transportation options incl. walking, biking, transit, and driving	47.14%%	22.70%	14.12%	5.37%	10.67%
Importance of clean and plentiful water, air, soil and food	50.79%	20.30%	13.45%	6.39%	9.07%
Importance of having physically and mentally healthy lifestyles	36.61%	22.33%	18.98%	8.92%	13.15%
Places Goals	Most Important	More Important	Neutral	Less Important	Least Important
Importance of coordinating infrastructure, housing and transportation investments	43.24%	24.28%	14.59%	5.69%	12.20%
Importance of preserving ecosystems, working landscapes, parks and open spaces.	34.95%	23.97%	18.55%	9.42%	13.12%
Importance of having a range of housing choices	26.09%	21.80%	23.25%	11.59%	17.26%
Importance of efficiently using, reusing, and conserving natural resources	39.39%	23.39%	17.66%	7.32%	12.25%
Prosperity Goals	Most Important	More Important	Neutral	Less Important	Least Important
Importance of having a skilled workforce and adaptable, resilient and diverse economy	38.33%	24.83%	17.68%	6.51%	12.65%
Importance of having job opportunities to support a good quality of life and financial stability	47.53%	24.37%	13.66%	4.91%	9.53%
Importance of having transportation and infrastructure that can move goods and connect to the region and global destinations	29.77%	23.84%	19.83%	10.71%	15.86%
Importance of community retaining its unique character by embracing its multicultural, historical and natural assets	29.83%	19.72%	19.39%	11.33%	19.74%

clean and plentiful water, air, soil and food" and "Importance of having job opportunities…" are present in the top three goals for each activity. "Importance of education and training opportunities" is among the top three for community meetings and public meetings. "Importance of having transportation options…" is among the top three among survey participants. As demonstrated by the results shown in Table 9, community meeting rankings for all goals tended to be higher overall when compared to the public meeting and survey results.

The MindMixer online forum prioritization results are not included in the combined prioritization analysis because of the MindMixer user format. MindMixer participants prioritized the draft goals by 'seconding' preferred goals, rather than ranking each goal individually. See page 34 for a full analysis of MindMixer prioritization results.

Table 9 - **Top Three Most Important Draft Goals, Public Meetings, Community Meetings, + Surveys**

Public Meetings	Most Important	More Important	Neutral	Less Important	Least Important
1- Importance of clean and plentiful water, air, soil and food	**69.13%**	15.27%	5.54%	1.34%	8.72%
2- Importance of having job opportunities to support a good quality of life and financial stability	**58.00%**	21.44%	5.80%	2.46%	12.30%
3- Importance of education and training opportunities	**56.26%**	26.38%	7.01%	2.50%	7.68%
Community Meetings	Most Important	More Important	Neutral	Less Important	Least Important
1- Importance of clean and plentiful water, air, soil and food	**95.08%**	4.03%	0.45%	0.45%	0%
2- Importance of education and training opportunities	**86.97%**	9.02%	3.13%	0%	0.88%
3- Importance of having job opportunities to support a good quality of life and financial stability	**81.94%**	12.62%	3.66%	0.89%	0.89%
Surveys	Most Important	More Important	Neutral	Less Important	Least Important
1- Importance of having transportation options incl. walking, biking, transit, and driving	**44.82%**	22.48%	15.95%	5.79%	10.95%
2- Importance of having job opportunities to support a good quality of life and financial stability	**40.69%**	26.53%	17.02%	6.06%	9.71%
3- Importance of clean and plentiful water, air, soil and food	**40.47%**	23.58%	17.23%	8.54%	10.18%

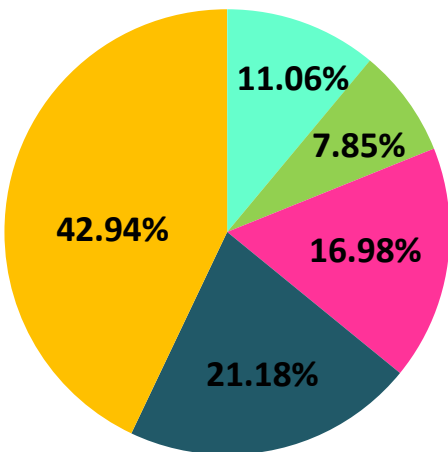## Figure 16 - **Combined Goal Prioritization Results, Public Meetings, Community Meetings, + Surveys**
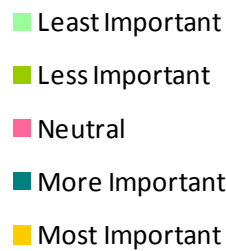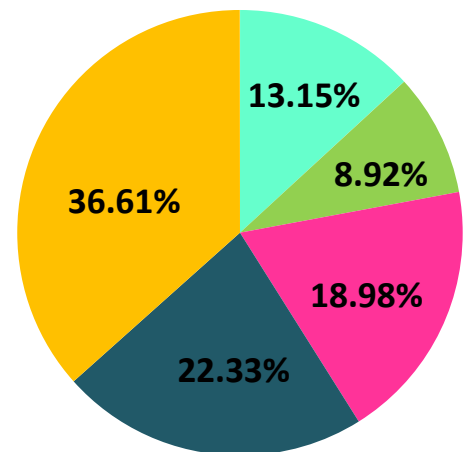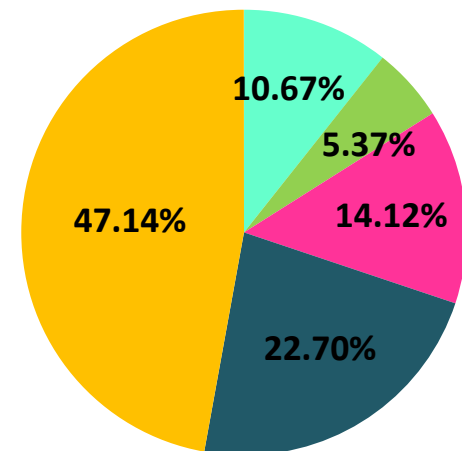
Coordinating Investments
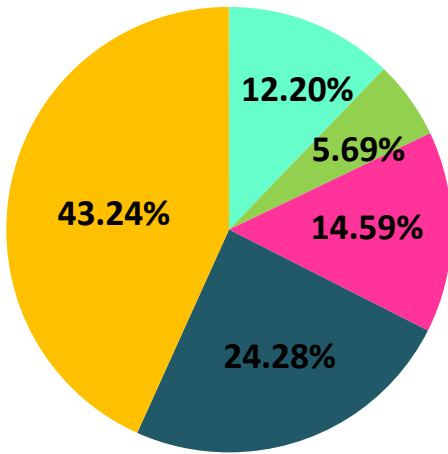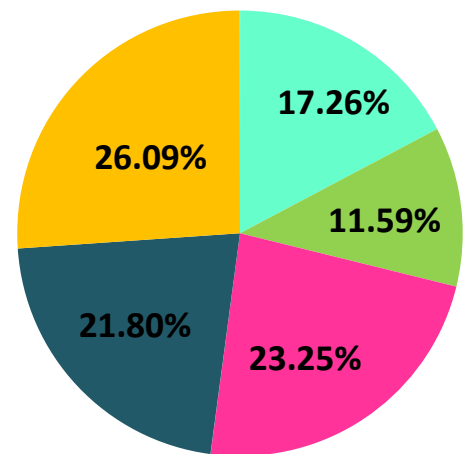
- 12.20%
- 5.69%
- 14.59%
- 24.28%
- 43.24%

Housing Options

- 17.26%
- 11.59%
- 23.25%
- 21.80%
- 26.09%

Education

- 11.06%
- 7.85%
- 16.98%
- 21.18%
- 42.94%

Healthy Lifestyles

- 13.15%
- 8.92%
- 18.98%
- 22.33%
- 36.61%

Legend:
- ■ Least Important
- ■ Less Important
- ■ Neutral
- ■ More Important
- ■ Most Important

Transportation Options

- 10.67%
- 5.37%
- 14.12%
- 22.70%
- 47.14%

Healthy Air, Water, Etc.

- 9.07%
- 6.39%
- 13.45%
- 20.30%
- 50.79%

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT
Houston-Galveston Regional Plan for Sustainable Development

Preserving Eco-systems, Open Space

13.12%
9.42%
18.55%
23.97%
34.95%

Reusing, Conserving Resources

12.25%
7.32%
17.66%
23.39%
39.39%

Access to Jobs

9.53%
4.91%
13.66%
24.37%
47.53%

Legend:
- Least Important
- Less Important
- Neutral
- More Important
- Most Important

Move Goods

15.86%
10.71%
19.83%
23.84%
29.77%

Skilled Workforce

12.65%
6.51%
17.68%
24.83%
38.33%

Retain Unique Character

19.74%
11.33%
19.39%
19.72%
29.83%
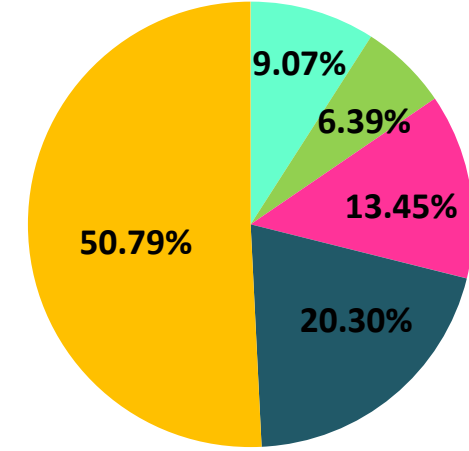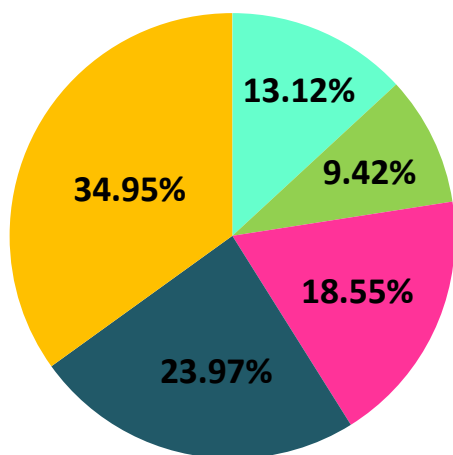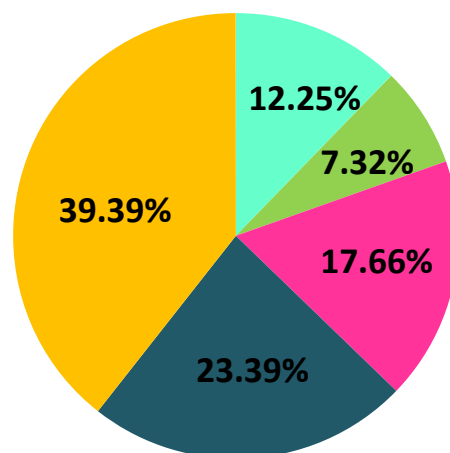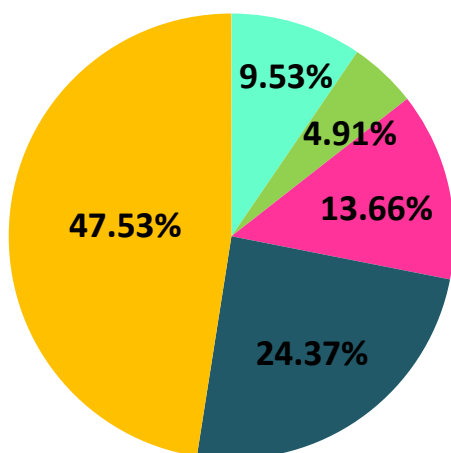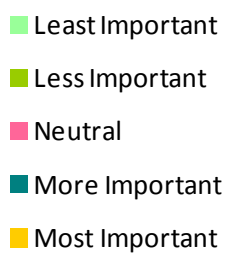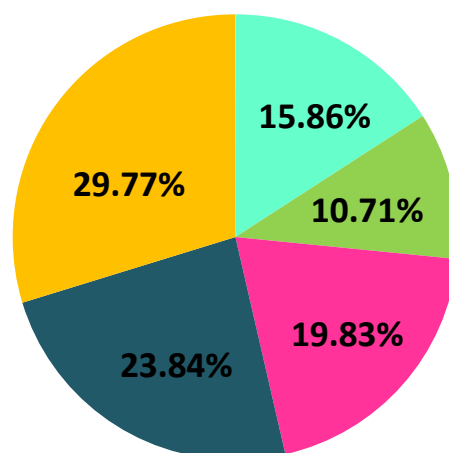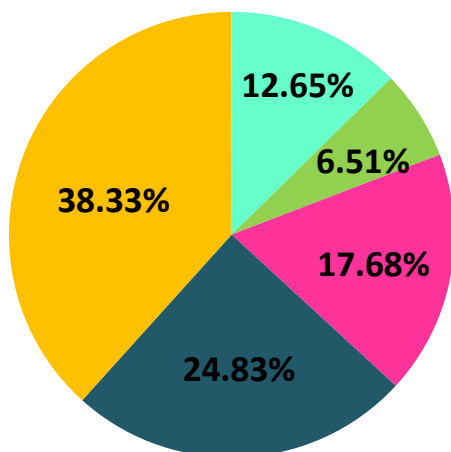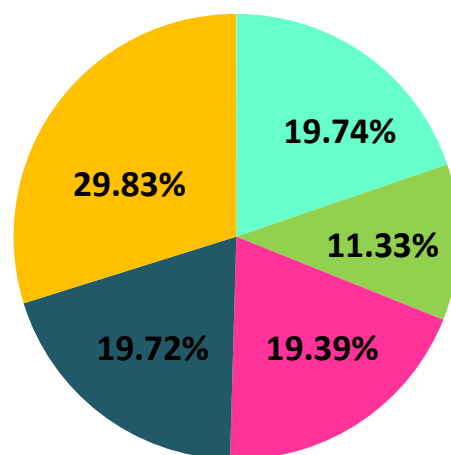
Section 6
Conclusions and Next Steps

Section 6 - Conclusions and Next Steps

The primary purpose of Phase IA and Phase IB outreach activities was to gather feedback from residents across the region to assist with prioritizing the draft goals of the Regional Plan, develop additional goals and shape an overall vision for defining quality of life in the years ahead. Synthesized input across all engagement platforms including the survey, large-format public meetings and community meetings emphasized the importance of clean and plentiful natural resources, quality job opportunities and financial stability, education, and transportation options.

Facilitated discussions at the public meetings stressed issues pertaining to transportation connectivity, education, and workforce training. Dialogue at community meetings highlighted many of these same themes, plus more concerns specific to local neighborhoods or unique to minority communities, such as expanded bus routes, adult education, and resources for small minority businesses.

Participants' visions for their communities in 30 years most often revolved around maintaining an exceptional quality of life, improving public transit and transportaiton choices, and ensuring a vibrant economy offering quality job opportunities.

Phase II of the process from June through December 2012 will focus on capacity-building through community-oriented training sessions, ongoing outreach online and at mobile events throughout the region to engage a larger and more diverse base of residents, and structuring additional large-format and community sessions to support the review and evaluation of plan scenarios.

Phase II Community Engagement Report

HOUSTON-GALVESTON REGIONAL PLAN FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

December 2012

Think 2040
TAKE THE SURVEY

HOUSTON GALVESTON **REGIONAL PLAN**

REGION VISION FUTURE
OUR
People Places Prosperity

DRAFT

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Appendix

Section 1
Introduction

Section 1- Introduction to Phase II

The intent of the outreach activities conducted as part of the Houston-Galveston Regional Plan is to generate substantive exchanges with citizens that are of sufficient breadth in number, geography, and respondent attributes to reflect the diversity and complexity of the region and to yield meaningful information for plan development. During Phase I of the engagement process, from January through May 2012, Houston-Galveston area residents participated as follows:

- 759 residents attended 22 large-format public meetings held throughout the 13-county region, sharing approximately 2,200 comments and 142 new goal proposals
- Over 1,000 residents attended 41 small-format community meetings
- Participants completed over 2,700 surveys
- 245 users participated in the Ideas.ourregion.org forum
- 97 residents volunteered to participate in the Community Ambassador Team program

While these numbers demonstrate significant contributions from committed residents, stakeholders, and partners, the project team identified gaps in participation, both geographic and demographic, and refined the tools and strategies implemented in Phase I in order to increase resident involvement numbers and to connect with additional segments of the Houston-Galveston area population.

The purpose of Phase II from July through mid-November 2012 was to:

- Increase the visibility of the engagement process and promote general awareness of plan objectives;
- Promote broad, as well as targeted, participation in the Alternatives survey described in Section Four

Building upon the outreach activities completed and input received in Phase I, Phase II focused on expanding the depth and quality of exchanges through the following:

- Consultant review and strategy session of Phase II activities and results
- Citizen engagement at local summer festivals and markets, including the "Our Region is My Region Because..." activity
- Direct outreach to neighborhood and community associations, civic groups, non-profit organizations, educational institutions, and private sector
- Community meetings emphasizing survey participation and feedback among target areas and audiences
- Ongoing Ideas.ourregion.org on-line forum with 305 users
- Generate ongoing interest in the plan and related community-building initiatives

Figure 1 - Houston-Galveston 13-County Region
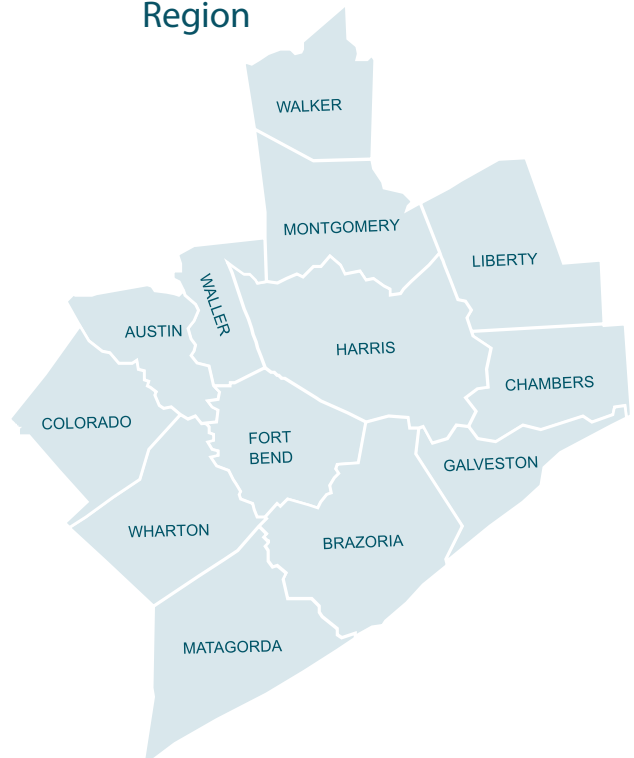
Highlights of the results of Phase II include:

Review and Strategy Session

- Recommendations from the strategy session included:

  - Defining a public participation goal number

  - Focusing on educating citizens to build support

  - Personalizing outreach efforts, particularly invitations and emails

  - Capitalizing on existing networks through committee members and partners

  - Maintaining planning transparency

Community Ambassador Team Training

- 191 Community Ambassador Team training session attendees

Summer Festivals and Markets

- 12 events throughout the 13-county region

- 1,075 total participants

- 642 "Our Region is My Region Because…" activity participants

Email Blasts & Online Survey

- Four email blasts containing a prompt and link to the on-line survey sent between October 12, 2012 and November 13, 2012

- Direct requests to participate in the on-line survey sent from strategic partners to an estimated 224,000 residents

- 6,242 respondents completed the on-line survey

Phase II Community Meetings

- Project team facilitated 8 community meetings, totaling 120 surveys and 124 total attendees

- Use of three computer kiosks and/or iPads for survey completion, with approximately 200 surveys completed at these sites

Ideas.ourregion.org On-line Forum

- 305 users contributing to the ongoing dialogue

- 28 new ideas posted during Phase II

- Sealybration Summer Festival

Sealy, TX

Section 2
Phase I Review & Strategy Session

Section 2 - Review and Strategy Session

Upon completion of Phase I of the community engagement process, the project team held a review and strategy session with public involvement expert Barbara Faga. The purpose of the session was to receive feedback on the outreach activities conducted during Phase I and to develop strategies to refine and guide the approach of Phase II.

As part of the review and strategy session, Faga reviewed all materials, reports, and documents created as part of Phase I, met and discussed the process with the project team and Houston-Galveston Area Council staff, and facilitated a meeting with the Coordinating Committee to assess the engagement process.

Recommendations

In response to the review and strategy meetings, Faga made the following recommendations:

- *Public involvement - lack of defined public participation goal number.*
  - A minimum of 1% is a goal to exceed in order to illustrate that a diverse population has been informed of the process
  - Look for opportunities and locations that attract a young, diverse population, such as universities, radio, newspapers, business leaders and partner web sites that can speak to jobs and education
  - A variety of social media is important to the process, as diverse populations may not have regular access to computers but are generally active on cell phone use
- *Education - the main goal of public process is to educate people.*
  - By educating large numbers of the population the project team can:
    - Build a constituency in support for the project and
    - Identify champions or leaders that will emerge to support the issues

- *Professional/social networks - research shows that people do not respond to requests to visit web sites for information or to fill out surveys unless the person making the request is someone they trust personally or by reputation.*
  - It is not enough to send a broad email to constituents without a personal request to fill out a survey or attend a meeting
  - People are more apt to respond to someone or an entity they know
- *Roles and responsibilities - each committee member who has a seat at the decision-making table should leverage their professional networks to support the process.*
  - Those involved in the Coordinating Committee have extensive networks that can increase meaningful public involvement
  - H-GAC's role is to provide the information to committee members
- *Transparency is an important aspect of public meetings and the facilitator should adhere to the following goals when opening the meeting*:
  - It's an open honest process
  - There are no secret meetings or assurances
  - The press is invited and attends
  - Elected officials are invited and attend
  - The process is portrayed honestly to the public
  - Emphasis on creating a safe, comfortable forum for all interested residents to provide feedback
  - All available information is released to the public
  - Participation by a recognized community and impartial community leader is part of the process—the more leaders the better, in terms of quantity and quality

Section 3
Community Ambassador Team
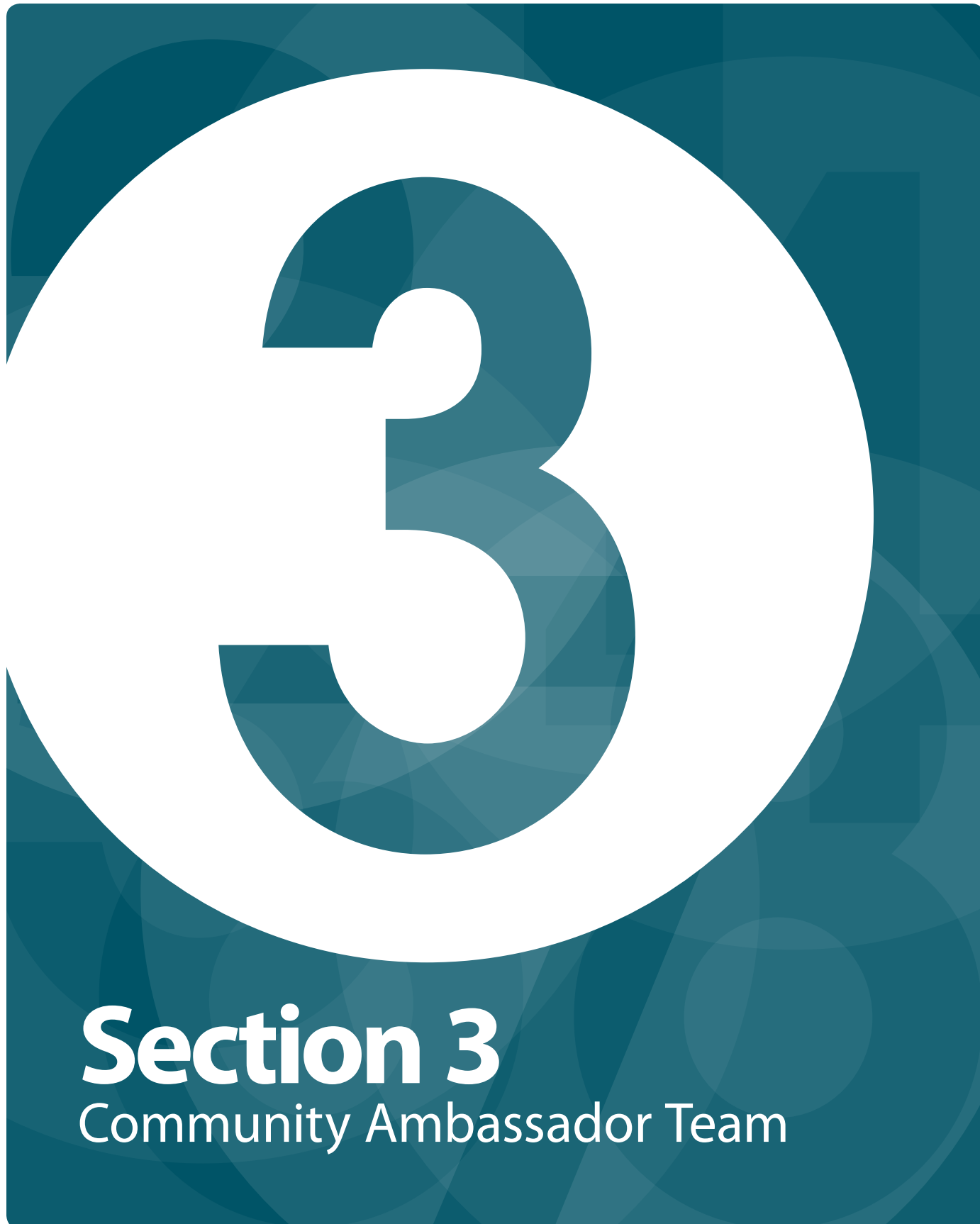
Section 3 - Community Ambassador Team

Given that one of the major goals of the plan is to build local capacity and promote resident engagement, the second phase of Community Ambassador Team (CAT) trainings in August of 2012 were geared to providing more in-depth communication strategies and readily accessible tools that individuals can use in the planning process for their communities and organizations, as well as in their personal lives.

Each two-hour session included information on common engagement approaches and public involvement goals, exercises to illustrate the value of message refinement and the assessment of organizational strengths and weaknesses, and a review of free, interactive tools to improve coordination and expand communication networks. Appendix D includes the CAT training session presentation.

To encourage participation in the sessions, the project team sent e-mail invitations to all CAT members from Phase 1, as well as the Coordinating Committee. Outreach in advance of the trainings also included direct telephone contacts of community groups, such as Chambers of Commerce, faith-based organizations, and civic associations, including Optimist/Rotary/Kiwanis/Lions clubs.

A total of 324 individuals registered with 191 participants attending the six sessions as shown in Table 1.

Table 1 - Phase II CAT Training Sessions

County	Event	Date	Registrants	Attendees	% of Registrants
Harris	Ripley House Community Training	August 6, 2012	87	42	48.3%
Wharton	Wharton Community Training	August 7, 2012	22	10	45.5%
Brazoria	Angleton Community Training	August 8, 2012	48	48	100%
Montgomery	Conroe Community Training	August 8, 2012	37	24	64.9%
Harris	St. Martin's/Houston Community Training	August 9, 2012	111	55	49.6%
Chambers	Anahuac Community Training	August 9, 2012	19	12	63.2%
		Total	**324**	**191**	**61.9%**

Section 4
Summer Festivals and Markets

Section 4 - Summer Festivals and Markets

The project team conducted outreach activities at summer festivals, concerts, and markets throughout the Houston-Galveston area region from July to September 2012, with an emphasis on diversity of events, people, and geography.

The central purpose of the summer festival outreach was to:

- Capitalize on existing venues and local gathering places
- Invite meaningful dialogue with members of the community that might not otherwise participate in more traditional meeting formats
- Invite feedback through activities, such as the "Our Region is My Region Because..." placard, intended to attract participants of all ages and backgrounds
- Fill gaps in geographic and demographic coverage resulting from the large-format meeting schedule of Phase I
- Provide a visual presence and increase exposure of the Plan brand and initiative

- Direct participants to the plan website, survey, and Ideas.ourregion.org online forum

The project team strategically chose 12 events that reflect various geographic and cultural contexts within the region. Table 2 outlines the dates and participation numbers of events visited.

At each festival or event, the project team set up the "Our Region is My Region" tent, distributed background information on the public engagement process, and invited citizens to participate in the "Our Region is My Region Because..." activity.

For this activity, the project team provided participants with placards stating "Our Region is My Region Because..." and asked them to complete the sentence. On a voluntary basis, the project team took photos of participants holding their "Our Region is My Region" placard, which were then posted on the project website.


- Our Region is My Region Tent

The diverse responses garnered through this activity highlight what individuals and communities value and enjoy about living in the Houston-Galveston region. Although content varied by geography, the type of event, and the age of the participant, many responses emphasized proximity to outdoor recreation, community sports opportunities, family and community, quality schools, and the region's job opportunities. Figure 2 illustrates example activity participants from each event. As outlined in Table 2, approximately 1,075 residents visited the tent to learn more about the Plan and, of these, 642 participated in the "Our Region is My Region" activity.

Table 2 - **Summer Festivals, Markets, and Events**

County	Event	Dates	Activity Participation	Total Participation
Austin	Sealybration Festival	July 7, 2012	46	73
Waller	Hempstead Watermelon Festival	July 21, 2012	22	148
Wharton	Wharton County Health Fair	July 25, 2012	44	101
Brazoria	Great Texas Mosquito Festival	July 26 - 28, 2012	102	158
Harris	Achievement Matters Festival	August 4, 2012	84	95
Harris	Houston Press Music Awards	August 5, 2012	30	40
Galveston	Rock the Dock Concert	August 9, 2012	35	42
Walker	Farmers Market	August 11, 2012	15	25
Houston	Baker-Ripley Back to School Health Fair	August 14, 2012	146	250
Harris	Dynamo Soccer Game	August 25, 2012	63	74
Harris	Harris County Fair	September 9, 2012	20	27
Fort Bend	Hispanic Heritage Day	September 25, 2012	35	42
		Total	**642**	**1,075**

Figure 2 - **Example Participants from Summer Events**
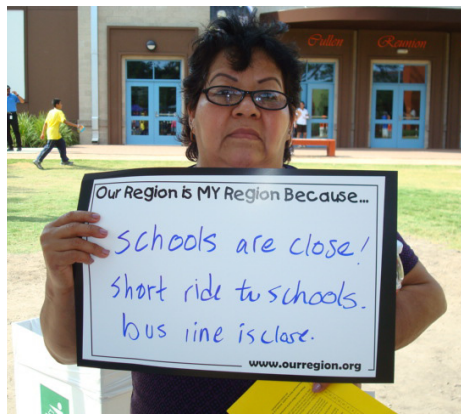
- *Baker-Ripley Back to School Fair 2012*

- *Baker-Ripley Back to School Fair 2012*

- *Dynamo Soccer Game*

- *Dynamo Soccer Game*

- *Harris County Fair 2012*

- *Houston Press Music Awards 2012*

Figure 2 **Cont'd - Example Participants from Summer Events**

- Houston Press Music Awards 2012
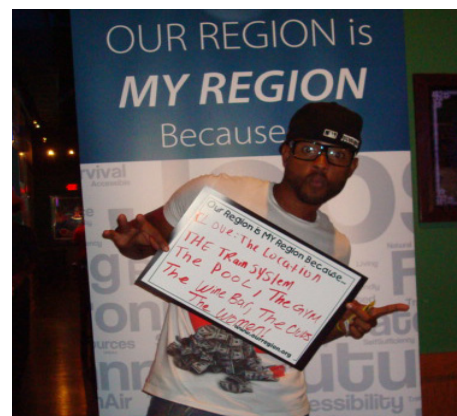
- Houston Press Music Awards 2012

- Huntsville Farmers Market

- Huntsville Farmers Market

- Kemah Boardwalk Summer Concert

- Kemah Boardwalk Summer Concert

Figure 2 **Cont'd - Example Participants from Summer Events**

- The Great Texas Mosquito Festival 2012

- The Great Texas Mosquito Festival 2012
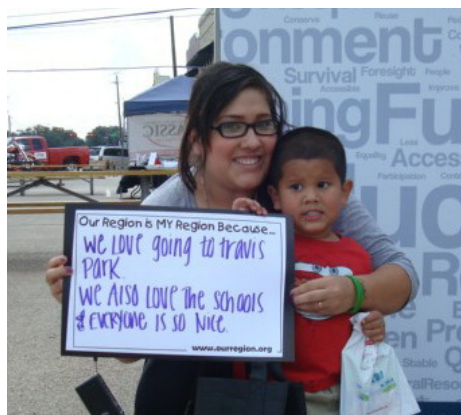
- Rosenberg Hispanic Heritage Day

- Rosenberg Hispanic Heritage Day

- Sealybration 2012
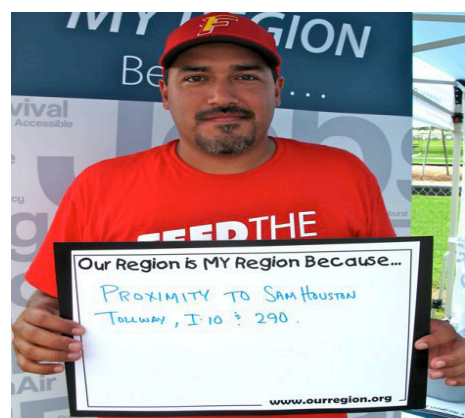
- Sealybration 2012

Figure 2 **Cont'd - Example Participants from Summer Events**

- 2012 Achievement Matters Festival

- 2012 Achievement Matters Festival

- Hempstead Watermelon Festival 2012

- Hempstead Watermelon Festival 2012
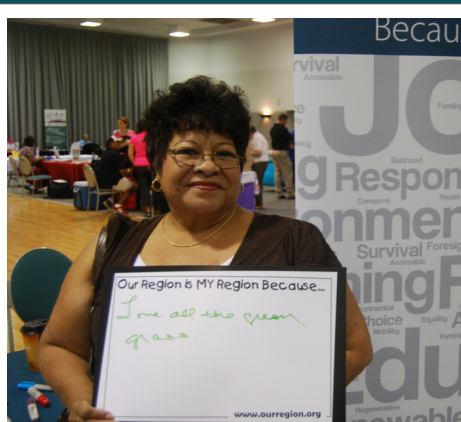
- Wharton County Health Fair 2012

- Wharton County Health Fair 2012

Section 5
Email Blasts & On-line Survey

Section 5 - Email Blasts & On-line Survey

Based on the top themes and priorities emerging from Phase I outreach activities, the H-GAC planning team developed an on-line survey depicting alternative 'futures' for the year 2040. The four alternatives listed below preceded a series of questions designed to further gauge citizens' preferences and priorities for future development and growth and to assist in evaluating trade-offs in potential public investment choices.

- **Current Course:** In this alternative, most of the growth occurs outside existing towns and cities. This helps keep housing prices down, but does not create long-term value for most homeowners, as older cities, suburbs and towns decline with the continuous movement of people to newer communities. The distance between jobs, housing and activities also continues to increase, meaning that driving remains the option for almost all the trips people make. Despite major upgrades in roads and freeways, traffic congestion keeps increasing, as the number of new drivers grows faster than the funds available for road expansion and maintenance. Public transportation, walking and bicycling increase somewhat, but don't make a dent in the congestion problem. Large amounts of green space and natural areas are converted to suburban-style development. Better designs and technologies help offset some of the environmental impacts, but these and other efforts to improve air and water quality are insufficient to keep up with the rate of population growth. There is a substantial decline in the region's overall education level as population growth exceeds capabilities of the existing education system. The region's minority communities, now the majority of our population, are disproportionately affected. This makes the workforce less competitive for many high-demand jobs, and economic competitiveness suffers.

- **Alternative Future: Less Time on the Road**: Imagine that the year is 2040, our region is experiencing anticipated growth, yet residents are spending less time on the road as a result of more public transportation options, more and improved bicycle and pedestrian paths and housing developments located closer to employment

opportunities. This decrease in time spent on the road boosts the economy since residents are now spending less of their incomes on annual transportation costs. Our region is also healthier as air pollution has decreased significantly over the past 30 years.

- **Alternative Future: Greener Region**: Imagine that the year is 2040, our region is experiencing anticipated growth, while still preserving and protecting our natural resources and improving air and water quality. This has been achieved through decreased development in lands that are not only prone to flooding but are also ideal habitats for the region's wildlife. More residents are making an effort to reduce their waste through recycling efforts. Our economy is stronger because we are spending less time and money re-building areas after natural disasters and are attracting businesses, residents, and tourists interested in enjoying natural areas. Plus, we are also healthier as a result of the decreased water and air quality issues over the past 30 years.

- **Alternative Future: Competitive Workforce**: Imagine that the year is 2040, our region is experiencing anticipated growth and one of the strongest economies we've ever seen. More residents are educated and are maintaining higher paying jobs. More companies are looking to the region as a place to do business and hire local workers. Businesses have flourished and the skilled workforce has become the envy of the nation over the past 30 years.

The on-line survey also included questions regarding strategies for transportation choice, open space and environmental preservation, air and water quality, education, and general needs within communities. See Appendix A for the full survey.

To assist in distributing the survey widely throughout the 13-county region, the project team developed a database of community partners and circulated a series of 'email blasts' to these organizations containing a prompt and link to the online survey. Among other stakeholders, the database of contacts included Phase I public meeting attendees, regional civic associations, healthcare providers, school

systems, local governments, non-profits, faith-based organizations, and Community Ambassador Team (CAT) members. Email blasts and reminders were sent on the following dates:

- Friday October 12, 2012
- Wednesday October 24, 2012
- Monday November 5, 2012 - to CAT members
- Tuesday November 13, 2012

The partner organizations shown in Table 3 were contacted directly by the project team and committed to assisting in the distribution of the survey.   These strategic partners circulated the email blasts to their distribution lists, included information regarding the survey in their newsletters, and/or posted the survey link on the organization's website.   Based on the distribution networks of the strategic partners, the project team estimates that more than 224,000 people received a direct link to the online survey. H-GAC also conducted a parallel outreach effort to invite participation from regional stakeholders and constituent groups. More than 6,200 respondents completed the on-line survey. See Appendix B for a full list of strategic partners and the project team's complete database of contacts.

Table 3 - **Strategic Partners**

Organization	Audience Type
Christus St. Joseph Hospital	Employees
HEB	Employees
Academy	Private Employer
Clear Channel Outdoor	Private Employer
Memorial Hermann Healthcare System	Private Employer
Kinder Morgan	Private Employer
National Assoc. of Minority Architects - Houston	Professional/Underserved
South East Civic Coalition	Underserved
Third Ward Community Cloth Cooperative	Underserved
University of Houston	Underserved/youth
Fifth Ward Super Neighborhood Council	Underserved
Houston Area Urban League	Underserved
Houston Citizens Chamber of Commerce	Underserved
Leadership Houston	Members
COH CitizensNet	Residents
COH Government	Employees
Greater Sharpstown Management District	Members
United Way	Affiliate organizations
Waste Management	Employees
Amegy Bank	Employees
BP	Administrative & field employees
Reliant Energy	Administrative & field employees
CenterPoint Energy	Administrative & field employees
Fort Bend County	County residents
Greater Houston Builders Association	Members
Houston Wilderness	Affiliate organizations
Houston Advanced Research Center	Staff
Greater Houston Partnership	Members
Houston Tomorrow	Members
City of Sugar Land	Newsletter subscribers

Table 3 Cont'd - Strategic Partners

Organization	Audience Type
APA Houston Section	Subscribers to listserv
Houston Downtown Management District	Members
Westchase District	Board & members
Greenspoint District	Members
Energy Corridor District	Members
Upper Kirby Management District	Members
South Montgomery County Woodlands COC	Members
Fort Bend COC	Members
Greater Conroe/Lake Conroe COC	Members
City of Houston Public Library	General public
City of Prairie View	Residents
East End Collaborative	Organization representatives
Houston Community College System	Students
Baker-Ripley	Underserved
Southeast Civic Coalition	Underserved
TSU	Students
Pearland Community Center	Residents
Palm Center	Underserved
Kashmere Multi-Service Center	Underserved
NHPO	Members
Wounded Warrior	Members
Shoes for Kids	Members
India House	Members
SER Jobs for Progress	Members
Port of Houston	Employees
Dayton COC	Members

Section 6
Phase II Community Meetings

Section 6 - Phase II Community Meetings

The community meetings conducted in Phase II of the public engagement process were organized as open-house sessions, targeting some previously visited groups, as well as other communities identified based on the ongoing analysis of participation demographics and geography. Table 4 outlines the community meeting locations, dates, and attendance numbers.

Purpose & Format

The primary purpose of the community meetings was to facilitate survey completion and provide updates on the planning process. Team members conducted the community meetings in two formats. In the first format, the project team conducted surveys through a dot exercise, wherein each participant responded to survey questions by placing a dot by his or her chosen response.   The dots were color-coded by zip code, allowing the project team to assess participation geography. In the second meeting format, the project team gathered survey input through the use of three computer kiosks and/or iPads.

In both meeting formats, the project team facilitated an abbreviated version of the online survey. The dot exercise surveys included questions pertaining to the four alternatives and a series of demographic questions. The kiosk survey only included those questions related to the alternative futures. See Appendix A for the full survey.

The project team conducted 8 community meetings using the dot exercise, totaling 124 attendees and 120 surveys. The project team also facilitated three community meetings using kiosks or iPads. In addition to the three kiosk-based community meetings, the project team organized kiosk survey stations at the

Table 4 - **Phase II Community Meetings**

Meeting Location	Dates	Attendance
Telephone Road	October 17, 2012	5
Third Ward Community Cloth	November 8, 2012	12
Prairie View City Hall	November 9, 2012	23
Cuney Homes	November 13, 2012	18
Texas Southern University Student Planning Organization	November 13 & 16, 2012	14
MacGregor Trails Civic Club	November 13, 2012	11
Missouri City	Novebmer 15, 2012	8
Kashmere Gardens	November 7, 2012	33
Chinese Community Center	November 9-12, 2012	Kiosk-based
John Gudrey Homes/Latino Learning Center	November 2-5, 2012	Kiosk-based
Ripley House		Kiosk-based

- Computer Kiosk

following locations:

- Houston Public Library- Central Library
- Greater Barbour's Chapel Church
- TSU School of Public Affairs
- Missouri City Parks & Recreation Department

Approximately 200 residents completed the online survey at one of the kiosk/iPad survey stations listed above.

Participant Demographics

Residents from 36 zip codes completed the dot exercise survey.   An overview of the demographics of the dot exercise participants is as follows:

- 80.3% were African American
- 67.8% were female

- 68.7% have lived in the region for more than 10 years
- 64.5% live in an urban area
- 65.1% were 55 years or older
- 71.7% earn less than $50,000 per year
- 24% held a Master's degrees; 17.5% completed high school or a GED; 14.9% had some college no degree
- Car is the primary means of transportation for 68.8% and transit/bus/rail is the primary means for 24%

Dot Survey Results

As previously mentioned, the dot survey exercise included an abbreviated version of the on-line survey, beginning on Question #24 and emphasizing the questions regarding the alternative futures. The results of these questions are as follows:

Question 24 - Alternative Future: Less Time on the Road

Imagine that the year is 2040, our region is experiencing anticipated growth, yet residents are spending less time on the road as a result of more public transportation options, more and improved bicycle and pedestrian paths and housing developments located closer to employment opportunities. This decrease in time spent on the road boosts the economy since residents are now spending less of their incomes on annual transportation costs. Our region is also healthier as air pollution has decreased significantly over th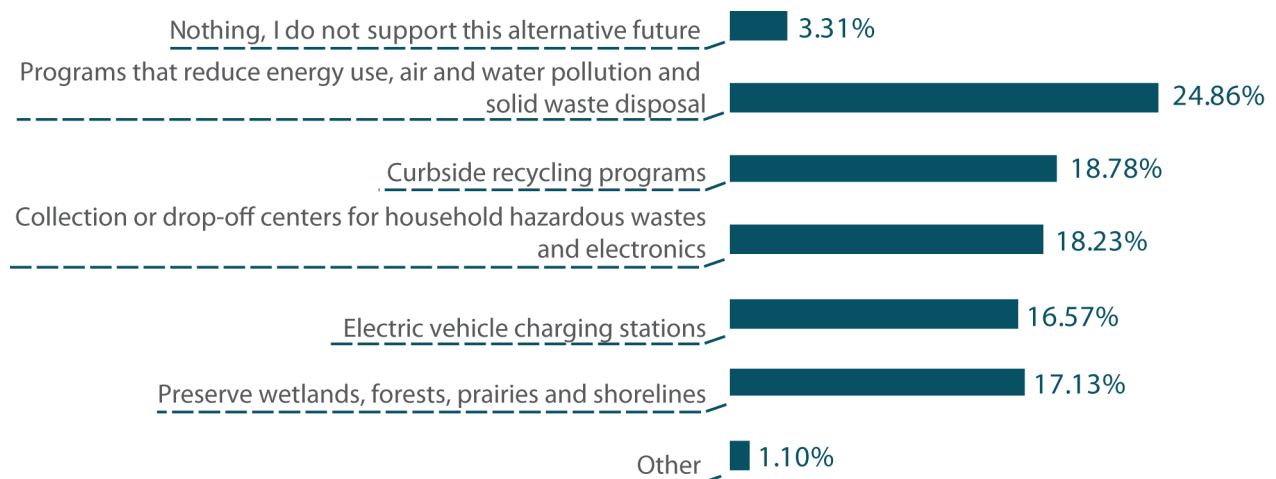e past 30 years. For this future to become a reality, which of the following would you and future generations be willing to support?
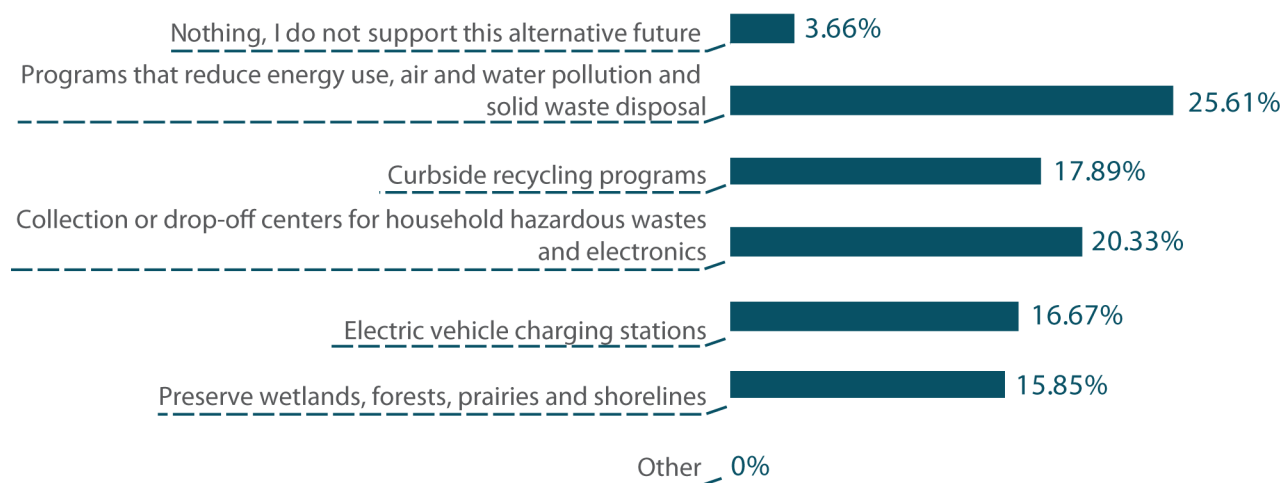
Nothing, I do not support this alternative future — 1.37%
Live in a smaller house to live closer to the places you want to go — 6.87%
Take public transportation to get to the places you want to go — 18.41%
More transportation funding going toward improving public transportation and bicycling/pedestrian pathways — 21.70%
Increased public transportation options even if you have to pay a fee or more taxes — 9.62%
Participating in carpooling, vanpooling or park and ride programs — 11.81%
Moving closer to your job or seek a job closer to where you live or work from home — 13.19%
Planning by local governments to better coordinate new development with transportation investments — 16.76%
Other — 0.27%

Question 25 - Alternative Future: Greener Region

Imagine that the year is 2040, our region is experiencing anticipated growth, while still preserving and protecting our natural resources and improving air and water quality. This has been achieved through decreased development in lands that are not only prone to flooding but are also ideal habitats for the region's wildlife. More residents are making an effort to reduce their wages through recycling efforts. Our economy is stronger because we are spending less time and money re-building areas after natural disasters and are attracting businesses, residents, and tourists interested in enjoying natural areas. Plus, we are also healthier as a result of the decreased water and air quality issues over the past 30 years. For this future to become a reality, I would support the following even if it means paying higher taxes or fees.

Nothing, I do not support this alternative future — 3.31%
Programs that reduce energy use, air and water pollution and solid waste disposal — 24.86%
Curbside recycling programs — 18.78%
Collection or drop-off centers for household hazardous wastes and electronics — 18.23%
Electric vehicle charging stations — 16.57%
Preserve wetlands, forests, prairies and shorelines — 17.13%
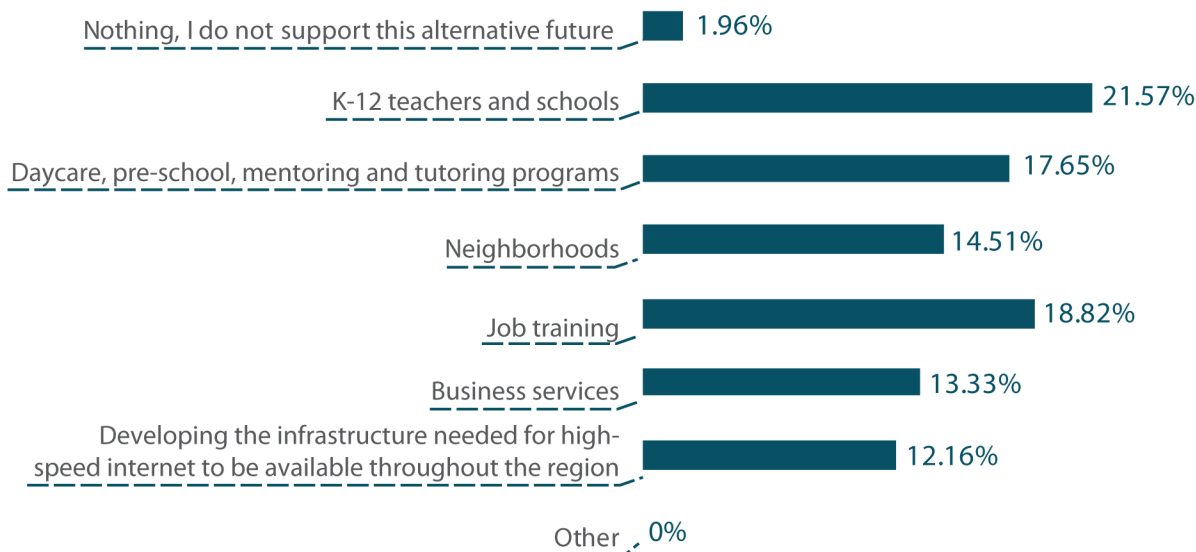Other — 1.10%

Question 26 - Alternative Future: Greener Region

Imagine that the year is 2040, our region is experiencing anticipated growth, while still preserving and protecting our natural resources and improving air and water quality. This has been achieved through decreased development in lands that are not only prone to flooding but are also ideal habitats for the region's wildlife. More residents are making an effort to reduce their wages through recycling efforts. Our economy is stronger because we are spending less time and money re-building areas after natural disasters and are attracting businesses, residents, and tourists interested in enjoying natural areas. Plus, we are also healthier as a result of the decreased water and air quality issues over the past 30 years. For this future to become a reality, I would support the following, only if it was accomplished using existing funds or through volunteer investments.
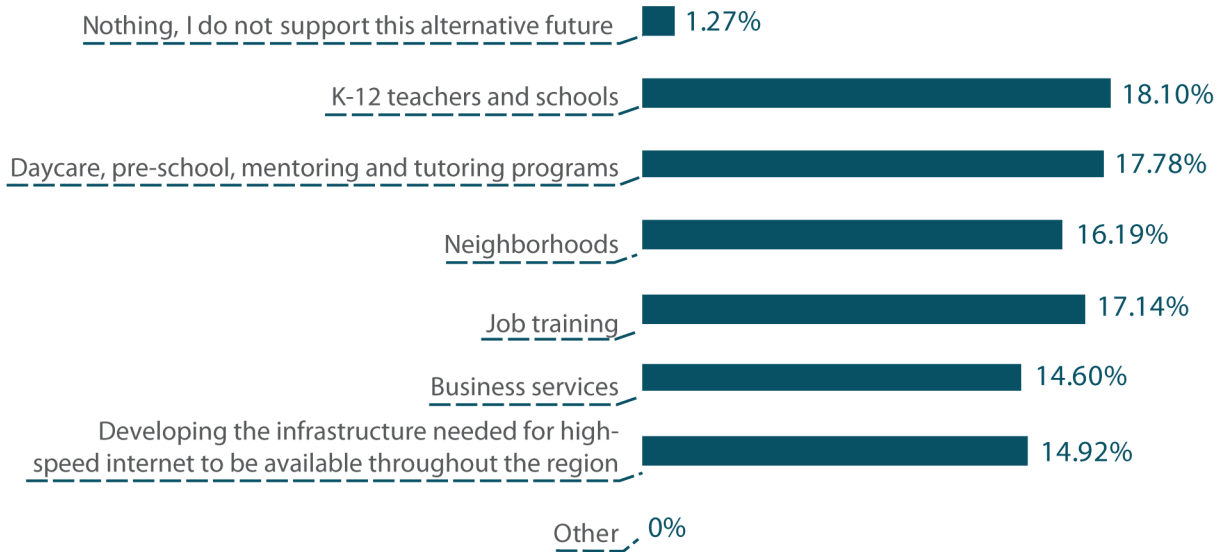
Nothing, I do not support this alternative future	3.66%
Programs that reduce energy use, air and water pollution and solid waste disposal	25.61%
Curbside recycling programs	17.89%
Collection or drop-off centers for household hazardous wastes and electronics	20.33%
Electric vehicle charging stations	16.67%
Preserve wetlands, forests, prairies and shorelines	15.85%
Other	0%

Question 27 - Alternative Future: Competitive Workforce

Imagine that the year is 2040, our region is experiencing anticipated growth and one of the strongest economies we've ever seen. More residents are educated and are maintaining higher paying jobs. More companies are looking to the region as a place to do business and hire local workers. Businesses have flourished and the skilled workforce has become the envy of the nation over the past 30 years. For this future to become a reality, I would support improving the following, even if it means paying higher taxes or fees.

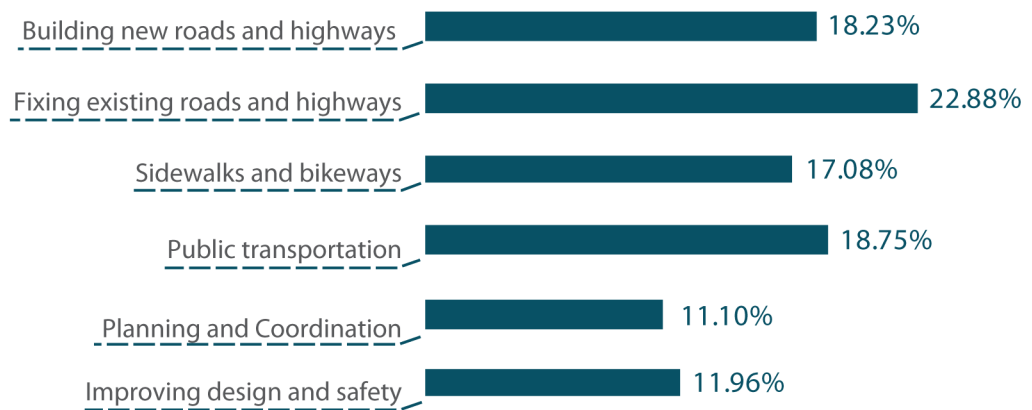|	
Nothing, I do not support this alternative future	1.96%
K-12 teachers and schools	21.57%
Daycare, pre-school, mentoring and tutoring programs	17.65%
Neighborhoods	14.51%
Job training	18.82%
Business services	13.33%
Developing the infrastructure needed for high-speed internet to be available throughout the region	12.16%
Other	0%

Question 28- Alternative Future: Competitive Workforce

Imagine that the year is 2040, our region is experiencing anticipated growth and one of the strongest economies we've ever seen. More residents are educated and are maintaining higher paying jobs. More companies are looking to the region as a place to do business and hire local workers. Businesses have flourished and the skilled workforce has become the envy of the nation over the past 30 years. For this future to become a reality, I would support improving the following, only if it was accomplished using existing funds or through volunteer investments.

Category	Percentage
Nothing, I do not support this alternative future	1.27%
K-12 teachers and schools	18.10%
Daycare, pre-school, mentoring and tutoring programs	17.78%
Neighborhoods	16.19%
Job training	17.14%
Business services	14.60%
Developing the infrastructure needed for high-speed internet to be available throughout the region	14.92%
Other	0%

Question 29

If you had $100 to spend on improving the region's transportation how would you allocate the funding?

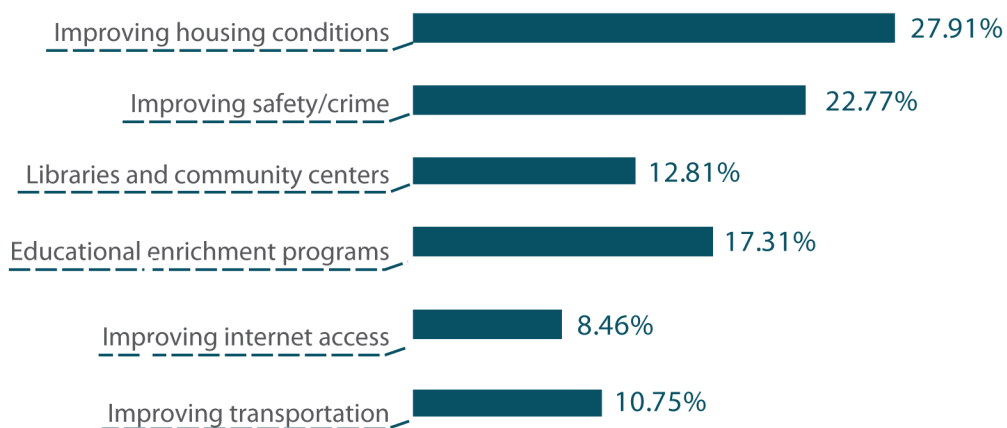| Category	Percentage
Building new roads and highways	18.23%
Fixing existing roads and highways	22.88%
Sidewalks and bikeways	17.08%
Public transportation	18.75%
Planning and Coordination	11.10%
Improving design and safety	11.96%

Question 30
If you had $100 to spend on improving the region's environment how would you allocate the funding?

Conserving wetlands, prairies, forests (purchasing land) — 10.57%

Education about the environment — 16.79%

Expanding recycling programs and centers — 12.52%

Weatherizing homes to improve energy efficiency — 19.91%

Planning and coordination — 10.44%

Water quality planning — 17.75%

Air quality incentives (telecommuting, engine replacement, etc) — 12.02%

Question 31
If you had $100 to spend on improving community factors that impact the region's education and training opportunities how would you allocate the funding?*

Improving housing conditions — 27.91%

Improving safety/crime — 22.77%

Libraries and community centers — 12.81%

Educational enrichment programs — 17.31%

Improving internet access — 8.46%

Improving transportation — 10.75%

Section 7
Phase II Mindmixer

Section 7 - Phase II MindMixer

Phase II of the ongoing on-line idea forum at Ideas.ourregion.org asked residents to share their thoughts about the ways that they use information, access services and goods, and participate in community life. Residents were also asked to identify great examples of sustainability in their local communities, including both small and big actions that make life better, healthier, and more prosperous.

Specific questions for the second phase of the forum included:

- Sustainability happens every day as small and big actions that make life better, healthier, and more prosperous. Share your ideas on people, places, and projects that you think are improving your community. Upload videos, photos or write a description.

- Getting an educational degree or training- If you had an opportunity to get a degree or training in an field what would it be? Is it available in your area? What keeps you from pursuing it?

- Running weekend errands- If you could make weekend errands without having to get in your car would you? If so, what kinds of things would that be and what would be your preferred way of getting around? If not, why?

- Grocery shopping- At what kinds of places do you shop for your groceries? Examples: grocery store, big box multipurpose store, farmers market. What makes you go there?

- Gardening and yard plantings- What types of plantings do you have in your yard or garden? Are any of them native to this region? Would you add more native plants to your garden if you knew more about them or where to get them?

- Places for outdoor physical activities- Do you have access to places to do outdoor physical activity? Examples: sidewalks, trails, parks, basketball courts, soccer fields. If so, what kinds of places and activities and where?

- Volunteering in your community- Have you ever participated in a community planning or improvement effort? If so, what was the activity and the outcome? Example: neighborhood association involvement, public meeting attendee or Make a Difference Day.

- Recycling- Do you have recycling services at your residence? If yes, what have you noticed about your trash levels? If no, would you use it if it was available?

- Participating in cultural activities- The region is known for its diverse cultural activities. What are some of your favorites and why?

Users contributed a total of 28 new ideas to the forum. Appendix C contains a detailed report of Phase 2 MindMixer feedback.

Participants comments and ideas emphasized the desire to see the use of alternative fuels, expanded recycling options, protection from future environmental threats and storms along the region's coast, additional affordable housing, and the development of regional transit options.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT
Houston-Galveston Regional Plan for Sustainable Development

Section 8
Next Steps

Section 8 - Next Steps

Community engagement for the Regional Plan will consist of two phases in 2013. In Phase III from January through March, the planning team will unveil the results of the Phase II alternatives survey as part of sessions with key community groups and regional stakeholders in an effort to gather specific technical input that informs development of recommendations and to build general support for plan adoption and implementation. Phase III will also include distribution

of a video to reinforce plan themes and illustrate examples local efforts to enhance in the region's communities (The video is being produced in Phase II with release scheduled in Phase III.)

In Phase IV beginning in September of 2013, the project team will conduct open house forums within the region to invite public input on the draft plan. Residents and strategic partners will also be notified through broad e-blast communications, as well as targeted contacts, of the availability of plan content for review and comment.

Phase III Community Engagement Report

HOUSTON-GALVESTON REGIONAL PLAN FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Spring 2013

Think 2040
TAKE THE SURVEY

HOUSTON GALVESTON **REGIONAL PLAN**

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Table of Contents

Appendix

Section 1
Introduction

Section 1- Introduction to Phase III

Thousands of people have participated in outreach activities conducted as part of the Houston-Galveston Regional Plan, sharing their vision for the region's future. Participants' diverse viewpoints are reflected in the plan's goals and objectives, which were influenced by input received in Phase I and Phase II of the public engagement process. Residents from throughout the region attended public meetings, completed online surveys, participated in online forums, and took part in other outreach events.

While previous phases of the community engagement process provided valuable input on residents' vision for the region, more technical input was needed to identify specific actions communities can take to realize the plan's goals and objectives. The purpose of Phase III was to:

- Receive technical input from policymakers and experts in a variety of fields;

- Refine local and regional implementation strategies prepared by the Coordinating Committee and project team;

- Identify community issues not addressed by the proposed implementation strategies;

- Increase awareness of the plan and results of the THINK 2040 survey, particularly amongst elected officials and other policymakers; and

- Encourage key community groups and regional stakeholders to become involved in regional planning efforts

Outreach activities in Phase III were conducted over several months, from February through May 2013. During that period, the project team:

- Conducted an analysis and review of the online survey completed in Phase II of the engagement process; and

- Facilitated group discussions with residents, policymakers, and experts on a variety of topics and issues.

These activities provided the project team with meaningful input from a diverse group of residents and decisionmakers living and working throughout the Houston-Galveston area. Highlights of Phase III include:

Phase II: Online Survey Review

- The project team analyzed responses from the THINK 2040 online survey, identifying common themes amongst different communities and populations

- The survey results were presented to groups throughout the Houston-Galveston area

Focus Groups

- 17 focus groups were held throughout the region

- 118 residents, policymakers, and subject experts participated

Advisory Committee Discussions

- The project team facilitated discussions with 15 advisory committees overseen by the Houston-Galveston Area Council

- 421 committee members participated

2

Section 2
Online Survey Review

Section 2 - Online Survey Review

Upon completion of Phase II, the project team reviewed responses from the THINK 2040 online survey. For the survey, respondents were asked to consider three future scenarios for the region. Each represents one of the top three areas residents indicated were important during a previous survey:

• Less Time on the Road

• Greener Region

• Competitive Workforce

As a baseline, respondents also considered what the future would look like if current growth, environmental, and educational trends continue. 7,677 residents from throughout the region responded to the survey over an eight-week period (Appendix A).

Once the survey was closed, the project team analyzed the responses received, identifying common themes amongst different communities and populations. Survey results for the entire region were studied and categorized according to the respondents':

• Gender

• Household size

• Ethnicity

• Household income

• Age

• Educational attainment

• Length of residence within the Houston-Galveston area

To determine if certain areas or types of communities have special needs, the project team also considered respondents' county of residence, and whether they live in:

* Coastal or inland communities

* Cities or unincorporated areas

* Rural, suburban or urban locations

The survey revealed that the region's diverse communities have different needs and visions for the future. Despite these differences, there are some core values that tie the region together.

This analysis influenced development of implementation strategies, actions that the region can take to realize the plan's goals and objectives. The survey results were presented to groups throughout the Houston-Galveston area, and were used to facilitate discussion at each of the focus groups (see Section 3). The information was also posted on the project website, providing the public with opportunities to review the responses.

Table 1 - **THINK 2040 Online Survey: Lessons Learned**

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Less Time on the Road

Congestion is not a major concern now, but will be in the future. 78.3% of respondents think it is very easy, easy, or not that difficult to get to the places they want to go, while 73.4% think it will be more or a lot more difficult to travel in 2040.

Respondents want to live in safe neighborhoods close to employment and activities.

As the region continues to grow, most respondents (42.9%) want their communities to remain unchanged. Younger respondents and minority populations were more receptive to having additional jobs, housing, and/or retail in their area.

Most respondents (44.4%) want future growth to be accommodated by redeveloping existing cities and towns, as well as building some new suburban areas.

Most respondents (57.3%) support planning efforts by local governments.

Greener Region

There is strong support for conservation and environmental stewardship, with 95.5% of respondents agreeing that steps should be taken to preserve the region's unique ecosystems.

Most respondents (65.2%) think that the quality of the region's air, water, and natural areas will be worse in 2040 than it is today.

Rural respondents prefer preserving natural areas through voluntary measures, while urban and suburban respondents show greater support for using public funds and regulation to buy and protect open space.

Competitive Workforce

The majority of respondents (77.1%) think that their communities provide opportunities for a good education.

Rural respondents are significantly less satisfied with opportunities for learning new job skills than suburban and urban respondents are. Rural respondents also have less access to these opportunities.

Section 3
Focus Groups
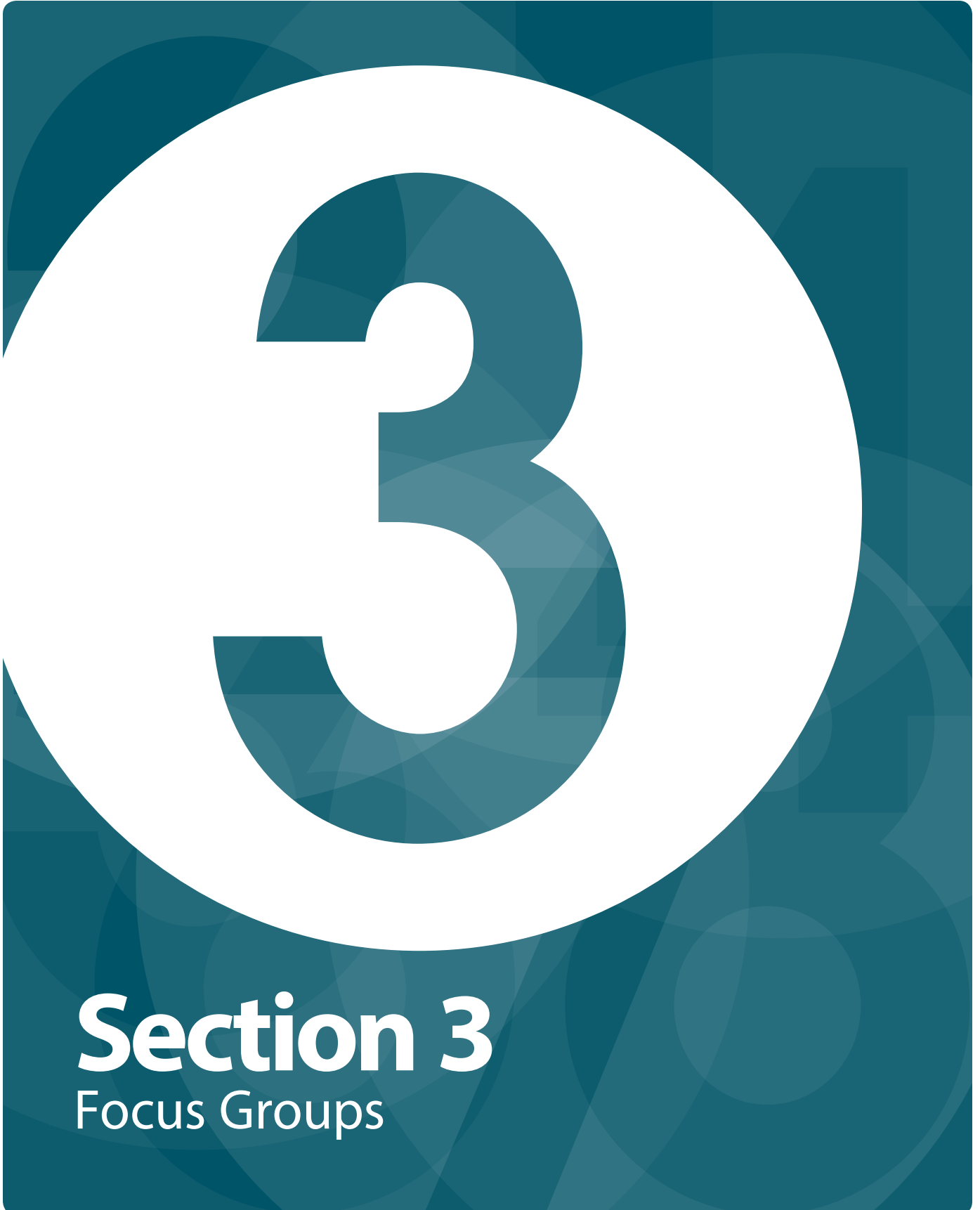
Section 3 - Focus Groups

As part of the planning process, the Coordinating Committee and project team worked together to identify actions local governments, non-profits, and other stakeholders can take to fulfill the region's goals and objectives. These implementation strategies address a range of issues, some of which are highly-technical in nature.

To ensure the proposed strategies are appropriate for communities in the Houston-Galveston area, the project team sought the advice of policymakers and subject experts living and working in the

region. Experienced professionals, elected officials, and municipal employees participated in focus groups, large group discussions regarding proposed implementation strategies in six subject areas. The input received at these meetings helped the project team better understand the issues rural, suburban, and urban communities face
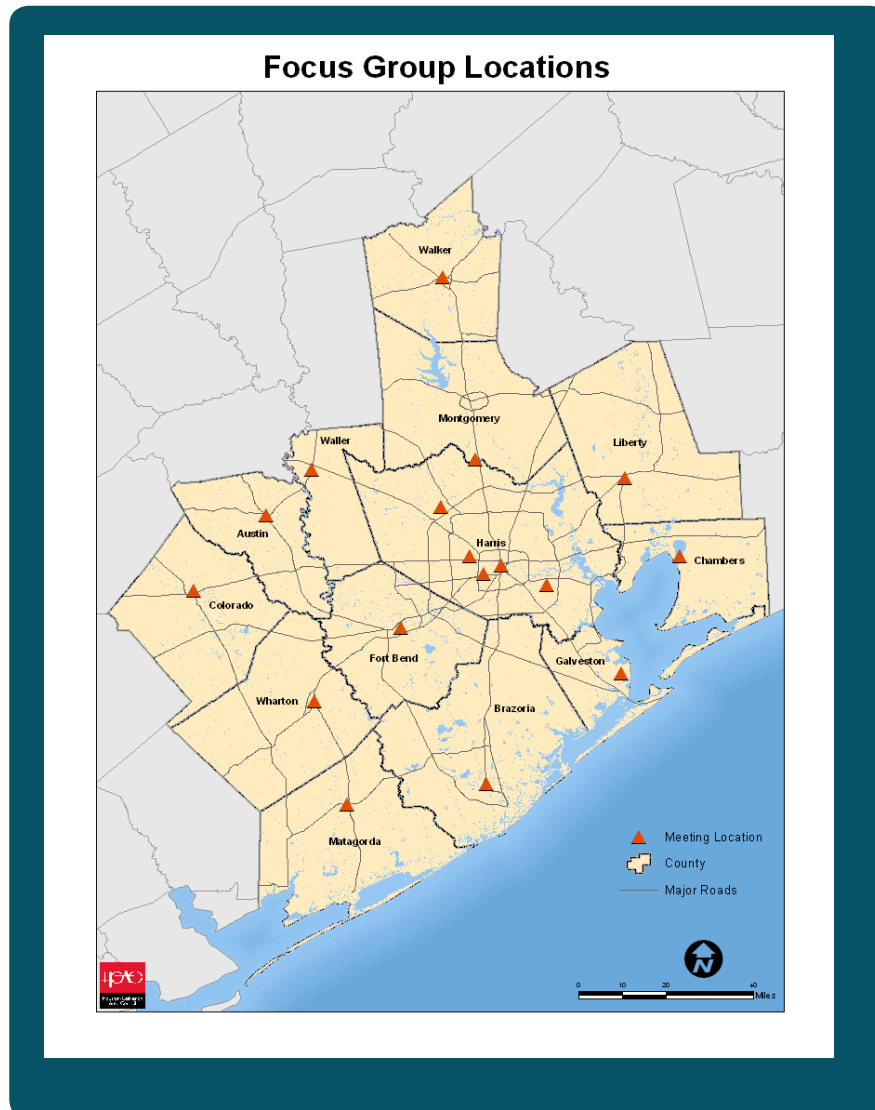

Focus Group Locations

Table 2 - **Focus Group Location and Particpation Requested**

Meeting Location	County	# Stakeholders Requested to Participate
Bellville	Austin	94
Lake Jackson	Brazoria	162
Anahuac	Chambers	67
Columbus	Colorado	54
Richmond	Fort Bend	143
Texas City	Galveston	165
Cypress	Harris	259*
Houston (City of Houston Employees)	Harris	N/A**
Houston (Urban Interest Groups)	Harris	152
Northwest Houston (Harris County Employees)	Harris	N/A**
Pasadena	Harris	259*
Dayton	Liberty	87
Bay City	Matagorda	72
Spring	Montgomery	132
Huntsville	Walker	71
Hempstead	Waller	59
Wharton	Wharton	60

* Stakeholders in Harris County were able to attend either the meeting in Cypress or the meeting in Pasadena.
** Harris County and City of Houston officials sent internal requests to their employees to participate.
The project team did not directly contact the requested participants.

Over a three-month period, 17 focus groups were held throughout the region. These meetings were held at publically-owned facilities in each of the region's 13 counties. The venues were located in the county seat or in another convenient, centrally-located community. Due to its large area and population, five meetings were held in different parts of Harris County.

Elected officials and professionals from a variety of subject areas were requested to participate in the focus groups. Of the 1,625 individuals the project team notified of these meetings, 118 attended. Highly-engaged participants provided detailed feedback regarding each of the proposed implementation strategies (Appendix B).

Section 3 - Focus Groups

Each focus group was approximately three hours long. Members of the project team facilitated these roundtable discussions, soliciting participants' input on the proposed implementation strategies and other issues facing their communities. To spark conversation, the project team began the meeting by presenting information about the regional planning process and sharing results from the online survey (part of Phase II of the engagement process). With direction from the facilitators, participants had 20 to 30 minutes to discuss each topic area: housing, transportation, environment, economic development, healthy communities, and resiliency. At the end of the meeting, each participant was asked to identify the single biggest issue facing their community between now and 2040 (Appendix C).

After each of the focus groups, a series of online surveys were emailed to all requested participants,

providing them with additional opportunities to comment on the proposed strategies. There was a separate survey for each of the six topic areas; participants could choose which topic area they wanted to provide additional feedback on. These online surveys allowed participants to:

- Indicate their support for each proposed strategy;

- Indicate which proposed strategies would be a priority for their community; and

- Note whether their community was already implementing similar programs.

Few people completed these online surveys. Many stakeholders that attended the focus groups did not complete the online survey, but provided valuable input in-person at the meetings.

Table 1 - **Major Issued Identified by Focus Group Participants**

Water Security

Communities throughout the region are concerned that available water supplies will not be able to meet future demand. In rural areas, agricultural interests are already competing with upstream municipal users for water to sustain their crops. Suburban and urban communities are concerned that shrinking water supplies will be unable to support their fast-growing populations.

Mental Heath

Many communities lack adequate mental health services. Participants said there are few facilities offering long-term care for the mentally ill, and many residents with mental health issues are unable to access treatment in neighboring communities, due to limited transportation options.

Vocational Training

Many communities would like new or expanded workforce development and vocational training programs. These programs would provide participants with greater career opportunities, particularly those that are unwilling or unable to attend college. Many expressed a desire to coordinate the needs of local businesses with courses offered by nearby school districts and community colleges.

Mobility

Mobility was an issue in many areas, with each community having unique transportation needs. Several communities were interested in expanding pedestrian and bicycle networks, while others wanted better-developed transit systems. Some communities, particularly in rural areas, identified a need for greater transportation options for the elderly and others unable to drive. While many people wanted their communities to have a multi-modal transportation network, some participants were unsure of the safety of, or interest in, alternative modes of travel.

Internet Access in Rural Areas

Many rural communities do not have adequate broadband services, hindering economic development efforts and negatively impacting residents' quality of life.

Advisory Committee Discussions

While the focus groups were being held, the project team also facilitated discussions with 17 advisory committees and subcommittees overseen by the Houston-Galveston Area Council. Each group consists of subject experts from throughout the region who discuss proposed policies and issues in their areas of expertise, ranging from air quality to regional flood management. After providing these groups with information about the regional planning process and results from the online survey, the project team discussed proposed implementation strategies that directly relate to each advisory committee's area of expertise. In all, 421 committee members participated in these discussions.

Table 2 - H-GAC Advisory Groups and Subcommitties

Aging Programs Advisory Committee	Regional Flood Management Council
Bacteria Implementation Group (BIG)	Regional Recycling Roundtable
Environmental Awareness Roundtable	Regional Transit Coordination Subcommittee
Gulf Coast Economic Development District (GCEDD) Board	Regional Plan for Sustainable Development: Fair Housing and Equity Workgroup
Local Environmental Enforcement Roundtable	Solid Waste Management Committee
Natural Resources Advisory Committee	Technical Advisory Committee
Operations Task Force	Transportation Policy Council
Parks and Natural Areas Subcommittee	Gulf Coast Workforce Board
Regional Air Quality Planning Committee	

- Our Region is My Region Tent

Section 4
Next Steps

Section 4 - Next Steps

Input provided by focus group participants will be incorporated into the draft plan, scheduled for release in late 2013. Phase IV of the public engagement will begin in September 2013, coinciding with release of the draft plan. The project team will conduct open house forums throughout the region, providing several opportunities for public comment. An interactive, easy-to-use website will allow residents to comment online, providing another venue for public input. E-blast communications will be used to notify residents, community groups, and key stakeholders about the new website, open house forum, and other public outreach efforts.

Phase IV Community Engagement Report
Our Great Region 2040

2013

HOUSTON GALVESTON **REGIONAL PLAN**

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Appendix

Section 1
Introduction to Phase IV

SECTION 1- INTRODUCTION TO PHASE IV

Thousands of people have participated in outreach activities conducted as part of the Our Great Region 2040 plan sharing their vision for the region's future. Participants' diverse viewpoints are reflected in the plan's goals and objectives, which were influenced by input received in Phases I through Phase III of the public engagement process. Residents from throughout the region attended public meetings, completed online surveys, participated in online forums, and took part in other outreach events.

Previous phases of the community engagement process provided valuable input on residents' vision for the region, as well as technical feedback identifying specific actions communities can take to realize the plan's goals and objectives. Phase IV of the community engagement and outreach process included opportunities for residents to review plan documents, participate in an on-line comment forum, and attend five Open Houses.

The purpose of Phase IV was to:

• Enable residents and local stakeholders to review plan documents and recommendations;

• Receive comments and input from residents and stakeholders; and

• Refine and finalize local and regional implementation strategies based on feedback received through Phase IV outreach efforts.

Phase IV outreach activities were conducted in October and November of 2013. During that period, the engagement team:

• Prepared and disseminated three E-Blast Announcements to prior phase participants and organizations to publicize the availability of the plan and invite participation in scheduled review and comment sessions;

• Participated in direct outreach efforts, in which the engagement team contacted organizations and community members to invite attendance to Open Houses;

• Facilitated five Open Houses held in strategic locations throughout the region; and

• Reviewed and synthesized the feedback received via the on-line comment forum and Open Houses.

Section 2
Phase IV Outreach Strategy

SECTION 2 - PHASE IV OUTREACH STRATEGY

OBJECTIVES

The primary purpose of Phase IV of the public outreach process was to give community members an opportunity to review the draft Our Great Region 2040 plan and other working materials. The outreach activities conducted in Phase IV included informational e-blasts targeting community members and plan participants, an on-line comment forum, and five Open Houses.

OPEN HOUSES

The overall objectives of the Open Houses were to:

- Create an interactive workshop environment where all attendees had opportunities to participate, ask questions, and provide plan input;

- Present information on the major regional and local strategies identified in the plan;

- Ask participants to prioritize strategies and provide feedback that can assist in shaping the implementation timeline for the study;

- Encourage long-term thinking on regional, community, and neighborhood issues;

- Present information on next steps and highlight opportunities for ongoing participation by residents; and

- Provide an opportunity for participants to indicate general support for the regional plan.

COMMUNICATIONS & PUBLICITY

The engagement team used the following methods to communicate information about the Open Houses to maximize attendance and attract a diversity of attendants:

- E-Blast Announcements for Open Houses:
  - To assist in publicizing the availability of the plan and invite participation in scheduled review and comment sessions, the engagement team distributed three e-mail notifications to prior phase participants and organizations.
  - Three E-Blast Announcements were released on the following dates:
    - October 16, 2013
    - November 4, 2013
    - Friday November 15, 2013

- Direct Outreach:
  - To ensure awareness of the availability of the draft Our Great Region 2040 plan and the comment period, the engagement team contacted select organizations and community interests to invite participation in scheduled sessions and to request that leadership notify members of input opportunities; and
  - Contacts included direct telephone calls and personalized e-mail notifications to strategic partners, including chambers of commerce, community centers, and international community organizations.

Section 3
Overview of Participation and Feedback

SECTION 3 - OVERVIEW OF PARTICIPATION AND FEEDBACK

OPEN HOUSE OVERVIEW

During Phase IV of the public outreach process, the engagement team facilitated five Open Houses in strategic locations in the 13-county region. The times and locations of the Open Houses were scheduled in order to accommodate the needs of the greatest number of residents and stakeholders.

The Open Houses were held in the following locations:

- Lake Jackson, TX
- Baytown, TX
- Conroe, TX
- Katy, TX
- Houston, TX

Table 1 outlines the location, date, and time of each of the five Open Houses and also highlights the attendance for each event. As shown, a total of 59 residents and stakeholders participated in the Open Houses. **Appendix B** contains the Open House sign-in sheets.

OPEN HOUSE FORMAT

The Open House events were organized primarily around a series of 10 informational stations within the venue. The stations included a mix of background resources for review, highlights from the plan strategies and recommendations, including the six Big Ideas, and an interactive input exercise. The Plan Input table included a strategy prioritization exercise, in which participants were asked to choose the 'Big Idea'

Table 1. Open House Schedule and Attendance

Location	Date	Time	Attendance
Lake Jackson Civic Center, Lake Jackson, TX	Wednesday, October 23, 2013	4PM - 8PM	3
Baytown Community Center, Baytown, TX	Thursday, October 24, 2013	4PM - 8PM	9
Lone Star Convention Center, Conroe, TX	Wednesday, November 6, 2013	4PM - 8PM	16
Leonard E. Merrell Center, Katy, TX	Thursday, November 7, 2013	4PM - 8PM	6
Houston-Galveston Area Council, Houston, TX	Saturday, November 9, 2013	10AM - 1PM	25

they would like to see prioritized for implementation. Members of the engagement team staffed stations and were available to answer questions and encourage dialogue and feedback from participants. The stations included the following:

- **Station #1**: Sign-in and Welcome

- **Station #2**: Plan Background and Orientation

  - Overview of plan process, including

    - Plan goals

    - Plan topic areas

    - Overview of Coordinating Committee and Workgroups

    - Plan development phases and products

  - Summary of prior public input activities, including

    - Meetings and focus groups conducted

    - Survey 1 results

    - Think 2040 survey results

- **Station #3**: Economic Development

  - Overview of findings, the regional Big Idea, and local strategies for economic development topic

- **Station #4**: Environment

  - Overview of findings, the regional Big Idea, and local strategies for environment topic

- **Station #5**: Transportation

  - Overview of findings, the regional Big Idea, and local strategies for transportation topic

- **Station #6**: Housing

  - Overview of findings, the regional Big Idea, and local strategies for housing topic

- **Station #7**: Healthy Communities

  - Overview of findings, the regional Big Idea, and local strategies for healthy communities topic

- **Station #8**: Resiliency

  - Overview of findings, the regional Big Idea, and local strategies for resiliency topic

- **Station #9**: Plan Input

  - Strategy Prioritization Exercise

    - Participants were asked to choose the 'Big Idea' they would like to see prioritized for implementation

  - General Input Exercise

    - Participants were able to provide general comments on the overall plan and process on a comment card provided

- **Station #10:** Plan Resources

  - Additional resource materials, such as other relevant studies and plans, case studies, and complementary plan products, such as the Community Resource Guide, for review

Attendees had the option of visiting all stations in sequence (from general to content-specific to input) or to participate at individual stations of interest.

Key materials were translated in Spanish and were available as a handout. A Spanish speaker was also present at each Open House to assist in facilitating dialogue.

Additionally, to encourage attendees to visit each Open House station, the engagement team issued each participant an Open House "Passport." After visiting each station, the Passport was marked by the station staffer. Participants who visited all stations were entered into a drawing to win a small prize.

REGIONAL 'BIG IDEAS'

The Open House stations highlighted the regional Big Ideas that were developed based on a synthesis of the data and feedback reviewed during Phases I through III of the public outreach and plan development process. The Big Ideas serve as short goal statements that capture the critical challenges facing the 13-county region and the corresponding goals and strategies developed to ensure that the Houston-Galveston area will continue to be a 'Great Region' in the year 2040.

The following Big Ideas were highlighted at the Open Houses:

- Economic Development Big Idea: To be a great region in 2040, we should strengthen our economic competitiveness through an educated and skilled workforce.

- Environment Big Idea: To be a great region in 2040, we should secure a clean and ample water supply.

- Healthy Communities Big Idea: To be a great region in 2040, we should cultivate places where people can lead active, healthy lives.

- Housing Big Idea: To be a great region in 2040, we should provide balanced housing choices near jobs, services and transportation options.

- Resiliency Big Idea: To be a great region in 2040, we should increase our resiliency to disaster and a changing environment.

- Transportation Big Idea: To be a great region in 2040, we should achieve a world-class transportation network.

ONLINE COMMENT FORUM

As part of the Phase IV outreach activities, the engagement team conducted a web-based public comment forum at the project website: ourregion.org. The public comment period began on October 16, 2013 and continued through November 18, 2013.

The online forum allowed participants to review the draft Our Great Region 2040 plan and provide feedback and comments. The draft plan was provided in English and Spanish.

The online forum also allowed participants to choose the Big Idea they would most like to see prioritized in their community and leave comments and feedback under each of the six Big Idea topics:

- Economic Development
- Environment
- Healthy Communities
- Transportation
- Resiliency
- Housing

OVERVIEW OF OPEN HOUSE FEEDBACK

Comments
The engagement team reviewed and synthesized the feedback and comments received from the Open Houses and the online forum. **Table 2** outlines the number of comments responding to each of the six Big Idea topic areas. In total, participants provided a total of 155 comments pertaining to the six Big Idea topics. Participants provided 29 general comments using the General Comment form on the online forum or at Open Houses. Comments were received from participants living in 106 zip codes throughout the 13-county region.

In general, the comments echoed support for the strategies set forth under each Big Idea. Some comments offered suggestions for refining strategies at a local level. For instance, several transportation comments stressed the need for additional public transportation options, in particular passenger rail. Economic Development comments stressed the need to emphasize education strategies to prepare the region for future economic success. Housing comments echoed the need for affordable housing options that meet the needs of all families and residents.

Big Idea Prioritization
Online forum participants, as well as Open House attendees, were given the opportunity to choose the Big Idea they would like to see prioritized first in their community.

As illustrated in **Figure 1**, the Transportation Big Idea was chosen as the first priority by 53 participants, followed by Economic Development and Healthy Communities.

Appendix A contains the comments received from the online forum and Open Houses.

Table 2. Online Forum Comment Totals by Topic Area

Big Idea Topic	Number of Comments
Economic Development	26
Environment	25
Healthy Communities	22
Transportation	37
Resiliency	17
Housing	28

Figure 1. Big Idea Prioritization Results

Topic	Value
Transportation	53
Economic Development	32
Healthy Communities	24
Environment	18
Resiliency	10
Housing	9