



2012 Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission Area Livability Survey

Summary of Results

**Prepared by:
The Virginia Tech Center for Survey Research**

November 2012



Table of Contents

Section Title	Page Number
Introduction	1
1 Methodology	1
2 Respondent Demographic Profile	5
3 Broad Priority Area Findings	9
4 Housing	14
5 Transportation	15
6 Land Usage	16
7 Energy	17
8 The Environment	18
9 Jobs and Economic Development	19
10 Health	21
11 Education	22
12 Arts and Culture	23
13 Safety	24
14 Bringing People Together for a Sense of Community	25
15 Overall Ranking of Individual Priority Area Survey Items	26
16 Quality of Life	28
17 Responses to Open-ended Survey Items	29
18 Conclusion and Data Storage	30
Appendix A	Survey Instrument
Appendix B	Response Frequency Tabulations for All Close-ended Items/All Respondents
Appendix C	Response Frequency Tabulations by Respondent Locality
Appendix D	Response Frequency Tabulations by Respondent FIPS Code
Appendix E	Word Clouds Representing Quantified Themes from Open-ended Responses
Appendix F	Open-ended Survey Item Responses by Locality

Introduction

The Virginia Tech Center for Survey Research (CSR) was retained by the Roanoke Alleghany Regional Commission on behalf of the Partnership for a Livable Roanoke Valley to conduct a comprehensive Roanoke Valley-wide survey in order to help inform the development of the valley's first coordinated regional plan. As part of this effort, a telephone survey was designed and administered in order to gain citizen input on a variety of aspects of life in the valley to inform priorities for action in developing plans for the region.

In the administration of the 2012 Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission Area Livability Survey, the CSR conducted a telephone survey of 1,030 citizens residing in either Botetourt County, the City of Roanoke, the City of Salem, Craig County, Franklin County, or Roanoke County. This report summarizes the data collection procedures and results of the survey.

1

Methodology

Sampling and Survey Instrument Design

A random-digit dialing (RDD) method was employed by the CSR for the administration of the survey. Both listed and unlisted telephone numbers were included in the sample for this project. Cellular numbers were also included in the random sample for the study. CSR worked with Survey Sampling International of Fairfield, CT, to define the parameters of the sample and to ensure the contact records for the study would be representative of citizens residing in the localities selected for inclusion in the study. While the CSR received locality information for each telephone record included in the study, because some exchanges border areas outside any



given locality and because survey respondents sometimes report residing in a neighboring geographic area to a target area, a screener question was also included in the survey. The screener question confirmed individual locality residence prior to beginning the survey with a potential respondent. If sample members reported residing in a locality outside the localities selected for inclusion in the study, the call record was eliminated from the eligible sample pool for calling. There were 191 sample members with this final call disposition code. For cases in which a survey respondent reported residing in a locality that was included in the study but was different than the one provided to CSR along with the call record, the locality reported by the respondent was associated with the respondent's data and used in analysis of the survey results.

Based on a total of 1,030 completed interviews, the survey has a sampling error of ± 3 percent. Therefore, in 95 out of 100 surveys completed with this number of interviews using the same sampling methodology and parameters, the results obtained would fall in a range of ± 3 percent of the results that would be achieved if interviews were completed with every potential respondent (in households with working land or cellular telephones) residing in the Roanoke Valley. Smaller sampling errors are present for items on which there is polarized response (e.g. 90 percent identical response on an item).

In order to assist CSR in the development of the survey instrument to be used for the study, the Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission provided CSR with objectives for the survey and also potential priority areas of interest for the study. CSR created the survey in a format that would be suitable for telephone survey administration using primarily scaled, fixed choice survey items. Demographic survey items were included such that the survey results could be analyzed by selected respondent characteristics. Open-ended survey items were included in the survey in order to assess what citizens like best about living in the Roanoke Valley and what they think is the greatest challenge for the Roanoke Valley in the next few years. The survey was pre-tested with Roanoke Valley citizens via phone and determined to be

suitable for survey administration and of an acceptable length not to hinder the survey response rate. The average call length of completed interviews in the study was 14 minutes. A copy of the survey instrument used for the study appears in *Appendix A* accompanying this summary.

Data Collection Procedures

All telephone calls for the survey were made by CSR staff members utilizing a Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) system at the Blacksburg, Virginia location of the Virginia Tech Center for Survey Research. All calls were made during the period between August 14, 2012 through September 27, 2012. CSR wrote a calling program to be used with CATI for administering the 2012 Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission Area Livability Survey. The program provides scripted survey items, precludes out of range responses and facilitates real-time data entry of all responses gathered on the telephone.

Each interviewer collecting data for the survey project participated in a project-specific training session for the project. All interviewers working on the project have worked on a variety of survey projects and have participated in multiple training sessions in both interviewing techniques and CATI. All interviews were monitored by a CSR Call Center Supervisor in order to ensure accuracy and proper interviewing protocol. Clarifying notes for specific survey items appeared on the CATI screens for interviewers to ensure that identical prompts were used for respondents requesting additional information about survey items or response categories.

CSR programmed all call scheduling such that each sample member remaining as a non-respondent was attempted to be reached at least six times at different times of day on different days of the week. A total of 8,716 telephone numbers were attempted during the survey administration. Sample members reporting residence in a locality other than those in the

Roanoke Valley selected for the study (Botetourt County, City of Roanoke, City of Salem, Craig County, Franklin County, Roanoke County) were excluded from the eligible sample pool (N=191); likewise, respondents who indicated a language or hearing barrier such that they could not respond or request that another adult in the household respond, were also excluded from the eligible sample pool (N=119). Households for which interviewers were told that only minors resided in the home were excluded from the eligible sample pool (N=36). Non-working telephone numbers (fax tones, out of service/disconnected numbers, automated disconnect services) were also excluded from the eligible sample pool (N=2,025). Non-residential numbers (N=368) were excluded from the eligible pool of sample members as well.

After the elimination of all the ineligible records described above, the remaining number of eligible sample members was 5,977. A total of 1,030 interviews were completed for this study. **Table 1** provides an overview of the final call dispositions for all sample members. Many sample members were never reached after numerous attempts and a final disposition of “no answer” was assigned. Therefore, the residency rate among these households is unknown. It may be assumed that a number of these households are indeed, ineligible sample members due to non-residence.

CSR utilizes a standard conversion calling protocol in which all calls that are coded as “soft refusals” are re-attempted utilizing more senior interviewing staff. A call is coded as a “soft refusal” when the potential respondent refuses but does not indicate a reason for exclusion from the calling pool (i.e. refusal due to illness, request to be removed from calling pool, etc.). Likewise, all telephone numbers deemed to be temporarily disconnected are attempted periodically throughout the duration of the study.



Table 1

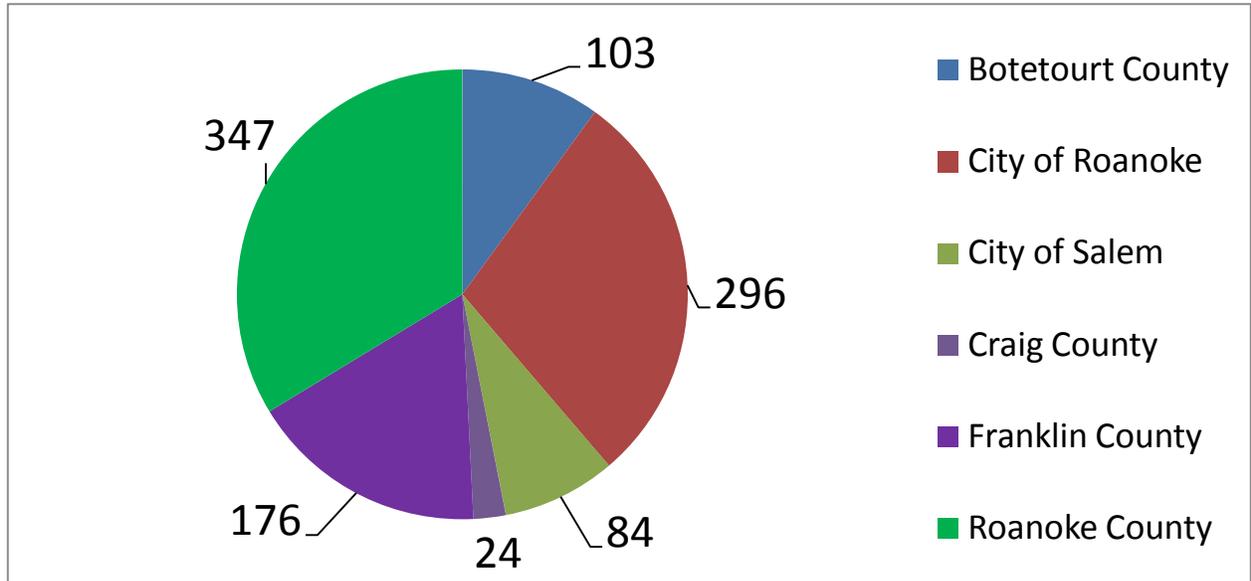
Total Initial Sample	8,716
Ineligible Sample:	
Residence outside Roanoke Valley (191)	
Language/Hearing Barrier (119)	
Non-working telephone number (fax tones, out of service/disconnected numbers, automated disconnect services) (2,025)	
No Adult Residing in Home (36)	
Non-residential telephone number (368)	
Eligible Sample	5,977
Total Number of Completed Interviews	1,030
Non-respondents:	
Final disposition of no answer, busy, answering machine or callback after six attempts (3,000)	
Refusals (1,947)	4,947

2

Respondent Demographic Profile

The responses to the survey are representative of the citizens residing in Roanoke Valley within ± 3 percentage points on individual items. **Figure 1** depicts the number of survey respondents reporting residence in each of the localities included in the survey. *Appendix C* includes the tabulated survey responses by respondent locality of residence. *Appendix D* includes the tabulated survey responses by respondent FIPS code.

Figure 1. Numbers of Respondents by Locality of Residence



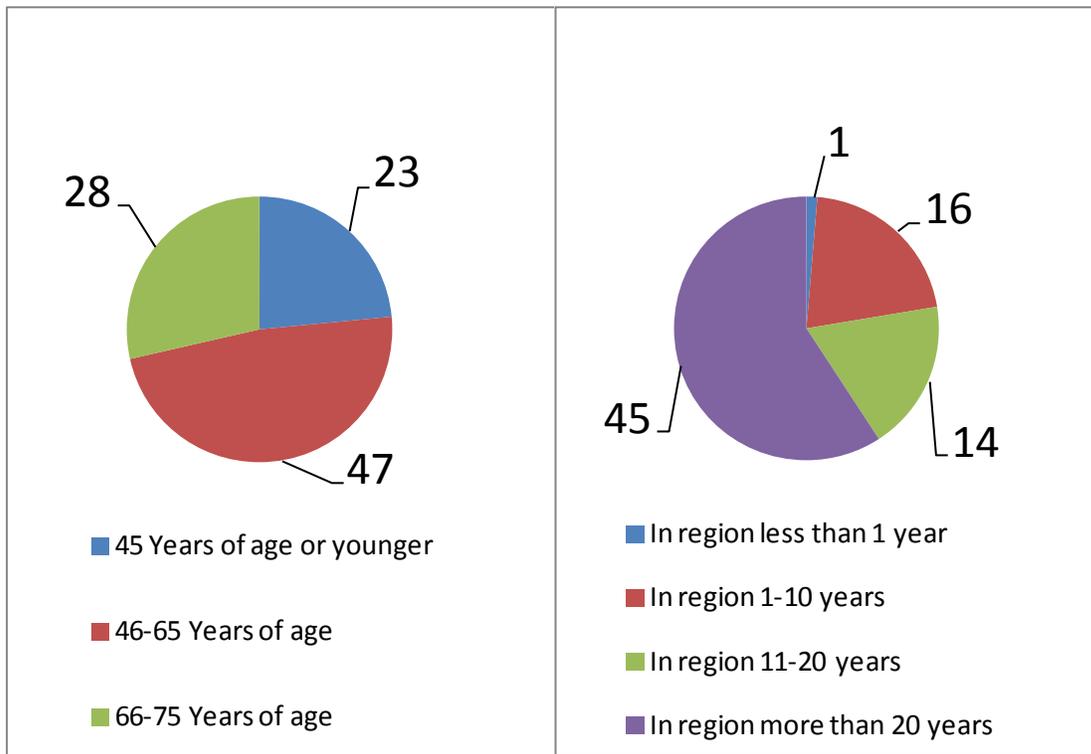
As is the case with most general population telephone surveys, more women completed the survey than men (40 percent men, 60 percent women). The self-reported race of respondents to the survey was as follows:

- 86% White
- 8% African American/Black
- 1% Asian
- 3% Other
- 2% Refused to report race

The majority of respondents to the survey had resided in the Roanoke Valley for numerous years with almost 6 in ten respondents (59%) reporting that they have lived in the valley for more than 10 years. Indeed, 45 percent of survey respondents have lived in the region more than 20 years, with 25% of respondents reporting that they have lived in the Roanoke Valley more than 50 years. Respondents to the survey reflect the average ages of citizens residing in the

Roanoke Valley. Only 10 percent of survey respondents were 35 years of age or younger at the time they completed the survey. **Figure 2** depicts the age groups and lengths of residence in the Roanoke Valley among respondents to the survey.

Figure 2. Percentages of Respondents by Age and Length of Residence in Roanoke Valley



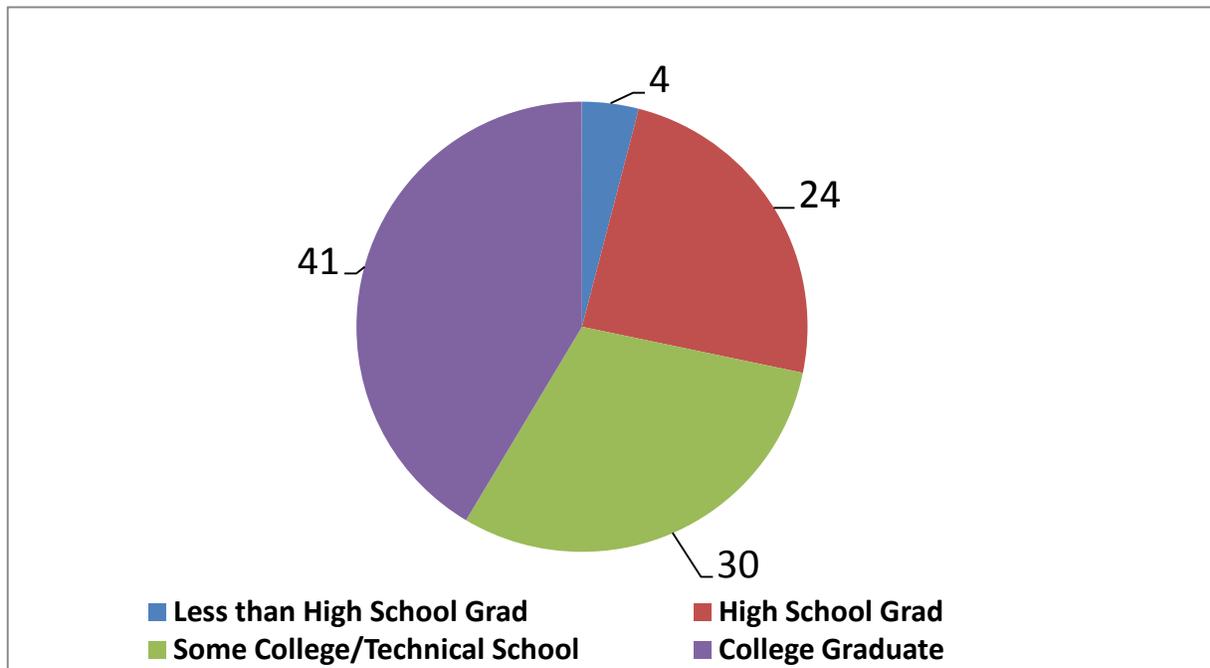
The high percentage of older respondents in the survey is also reflected in the number of respondents who reported in the survey that they are retired from employment (30%). Slightly fewer than six in ten respondents (59%) reported that they were currently employed for pay at the time of the survey, with 5 percent of respondents reporting that they are homemakers, 4 percent reporting that they are students, 4 percent were out of work, and 6 percent were unable to work.

Respondents were asked to report their total household income before taxes last year. While 17 percent of respondents refused to answer this question, the other findings regarding household income among respondents are as follows:

- 13% less than \$25,000
- 23% between \$25,000-\$35,000
- 33% between \$35,000-\$75,000
- 29% greater than \$75,000

Figure 3 depicts the educational attainment levels among respondents to the survey.

Figure 3. Percentages of Respondents by Education Level



Survey respondents were asked to indicate their household size. Almost 8 in 10 respondents (79%) reported living with at least one other person, while 20 percent of respondents reported that they live alone. Respondents were also asked a series of questions about possible



disabilities they may have. A number of respondents reported having some type of disability. The percentages of respondents reporting each type of disability included on the survey are:

- 8% serious difficulty hearing
- 3% blindness or serious difficulty seeing
- 5% serious difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions
- 16% serious difficulty walking or climbing stairs
- 2% serious difficulty dressing or bathing
- 4% serious difficulty doing errands alone

3

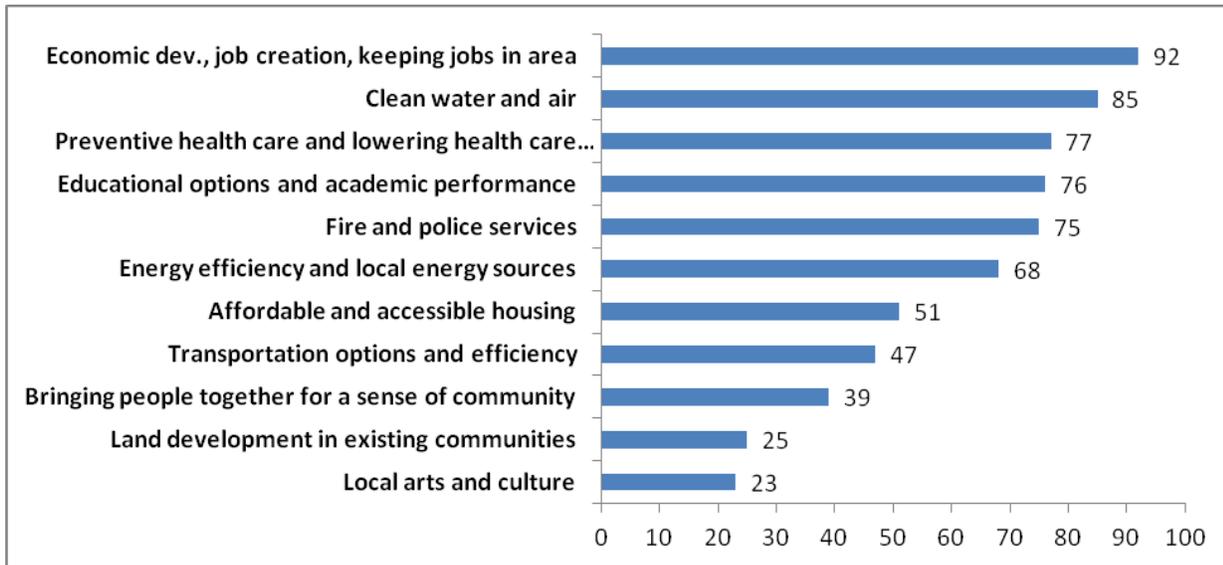
Broad Priority Area Findings

The survey instrument included a series of questions related to broad priority areas and asked respondents “how important do you think each of the following areas should be as priorities for the Roanoke Valley in future years?” Respondents were allowed to answer using the categories “top priority,” “somewhat of a priority,” “a low priority,” or “not a priority” or they could indicate that they did not know or could refuse to answer each question. The percentages of respondents rating each of the areas included in the survey as a “top priority” are depicted in **Figure 4**.

With more than 9 in 10 (92%) “economic development, job creation, and keeping jobs in the area” as a “top priority,” employment and the economy are clearly among the most important priorities for citizens in the Roanoke Valley. However, citizens in the Roanoke Valley also consider “clean water and air” to be a “top priority” with 85 percent of survey respondents using this response category to rate this aspect of life in the valley. The two items

presented to respondents that received the lowest percentage of “top priority” ratings were “land development in existing communities” (25%) and “local arts and culture” (23%).

Figure 4. Percentage of Respondents Rating Broad Regional Aspect as “Top Priority”



The highest two and lowest two priority areas for survey respondents are the same among survey respondents in all localities within the Roanoke Valley, indicating that citizens across localities share opinions regarding the priorities for the Valley in future years. However, there were some differences in some of the other areas included in the survey when viewing the survey results by respondent locality of residence.

While fire and police services, preventive health care and lowering health care costs, and educational options and academic performance were high priority areas among survey respondents in all localities, the ranking of these items as “top priorities” were different across localities. For example, Botetourt County was the only locality in which more than 80 percent of respondents rated fire services as a “top priority” and the City of Salem was the only locality

in which more than 80 percent of respondents rated educational options and academic performance as a “top priority.” Another interesting difference in the priority ratings of broad areas in the survey across localities is that affordable and accessible housing was an area rated as a “top priority” by fewer than half of survey respondents in all localities except for Craig County (71%) and the City of Roanoke (61%). Indeed, Craig County respondents are the only respondents for whom affordable and accessible housing was an area among the top five areas rated as a “top priority.”

Figures 5-10 depict the percentage of respondents rating broad survey areas as a “top priority” by locality of respondent residence.

Figure 5. Percentage of Respondents Rating Broad Regional Aspect as “Top Priority” in Botetourt County

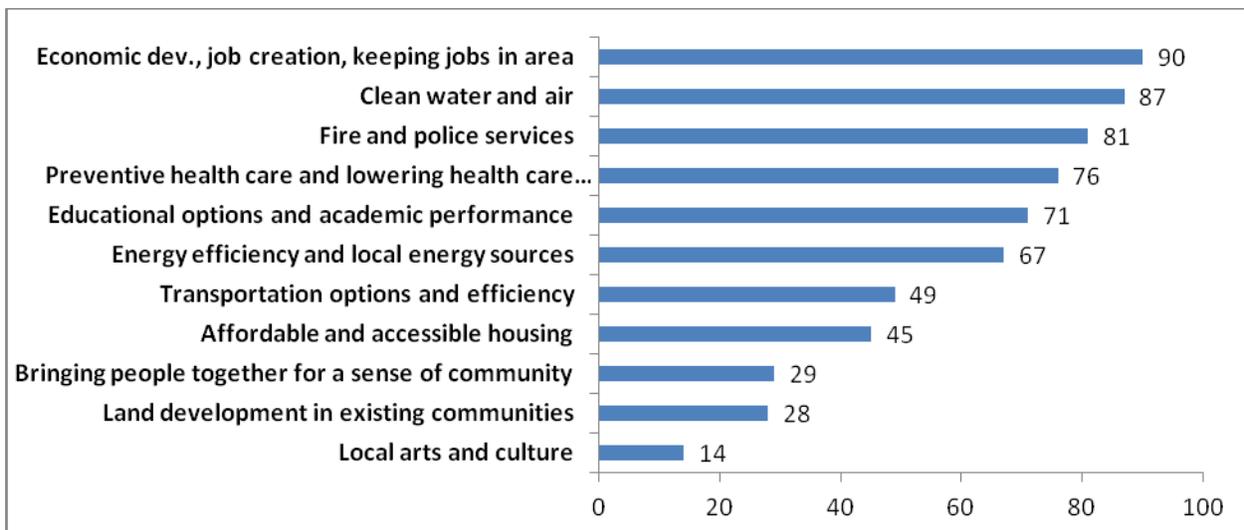


Figure 6. Percentage of Respondents Rating Broad Regional Aspect as “Top Priority” in the City of Roanoke

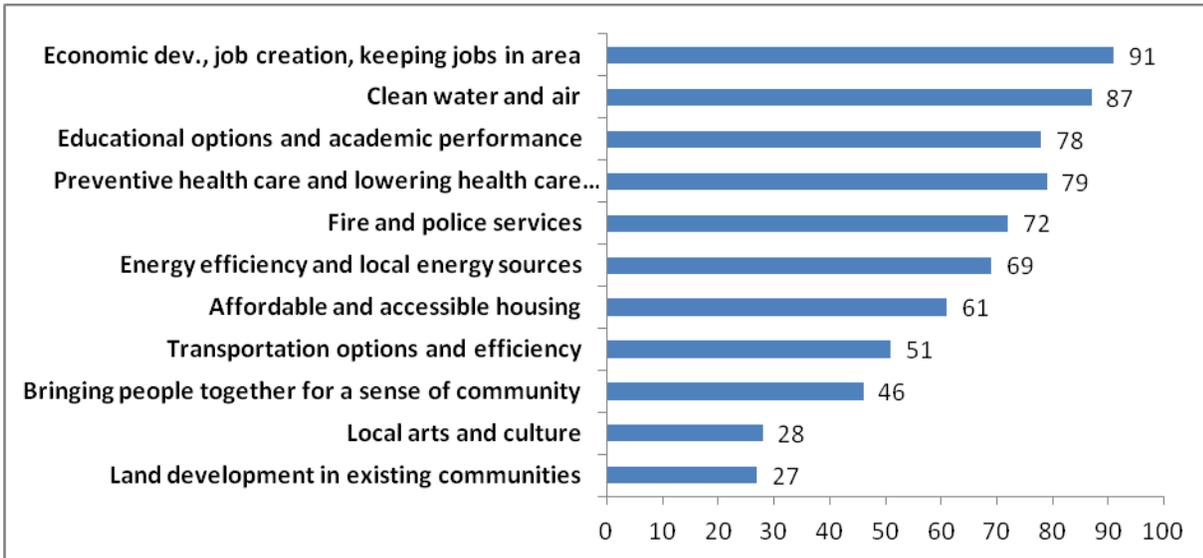


Figure 7. Percentage of Respondents Rating Broad Regional Aspect as “Top Priority” in the City of Salem

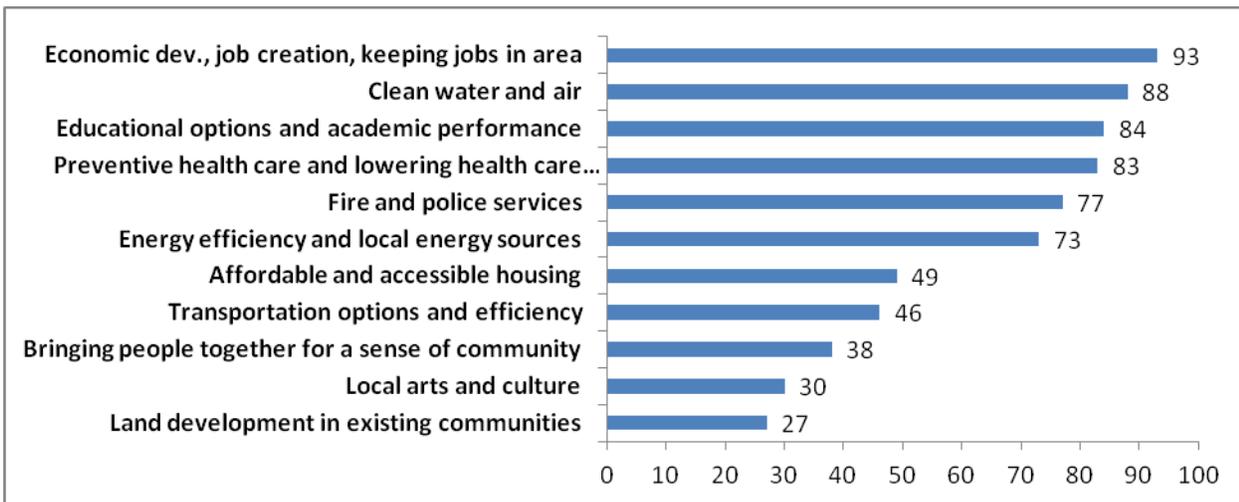


Figure 8. Percentage of Respondents Rating Broad Regional Aspect as “Top Priority” in Craig County

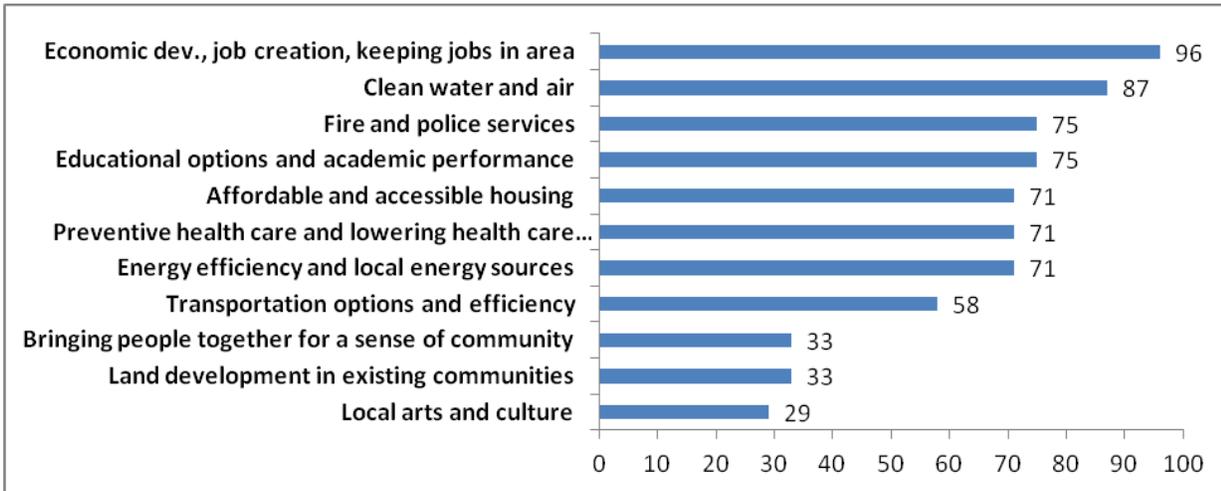


Figure 9. Percentage of Respondents Rating Broad Regional Aspect as “Top Priority” in Franklin County

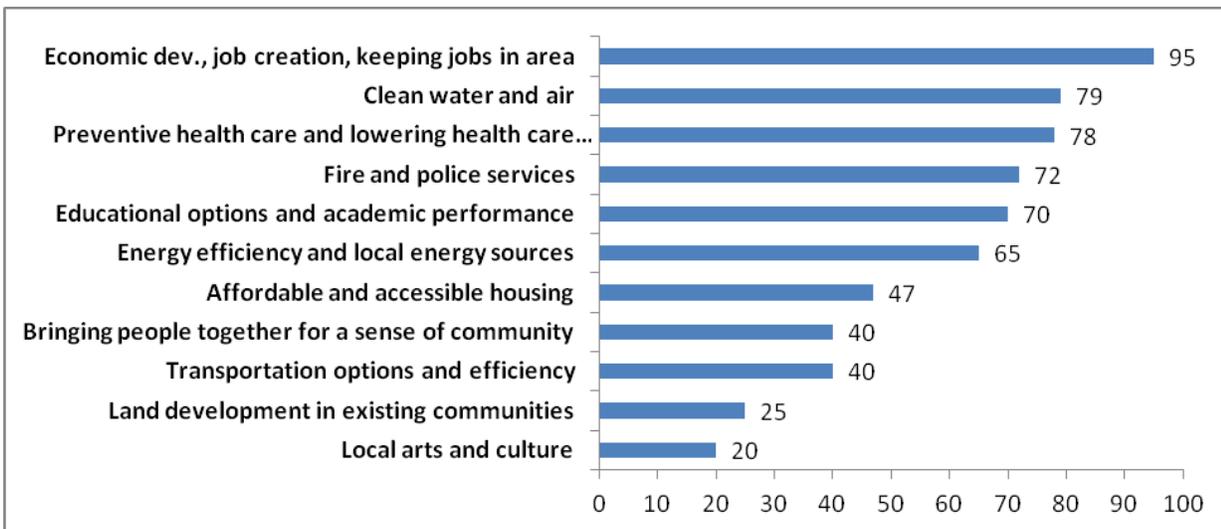
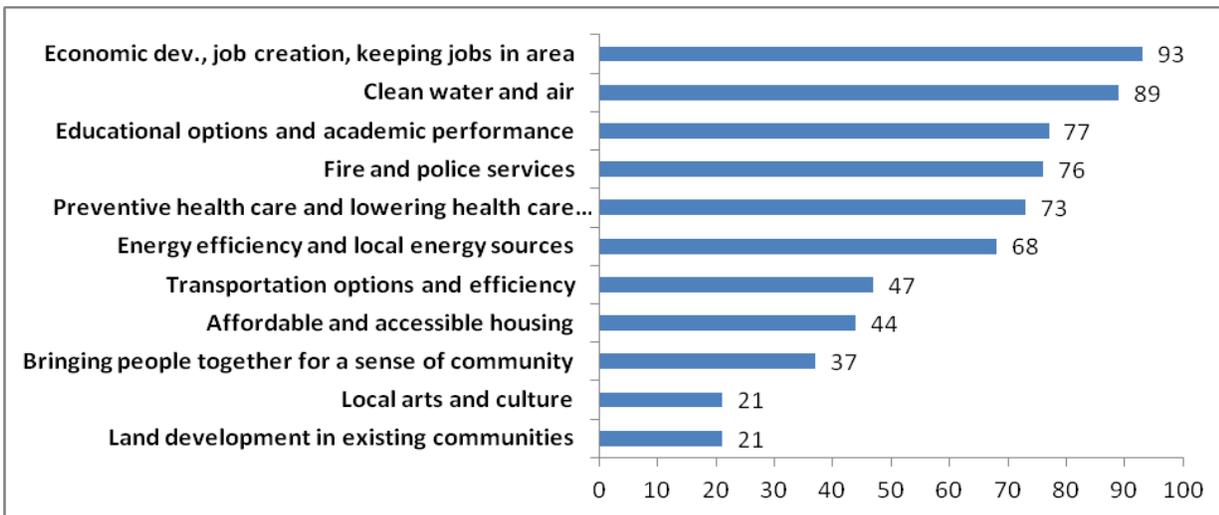


Figure 10. Percentage of Respondents Rating Broad Regional Aspect as “Top Priority” in Roanoke County

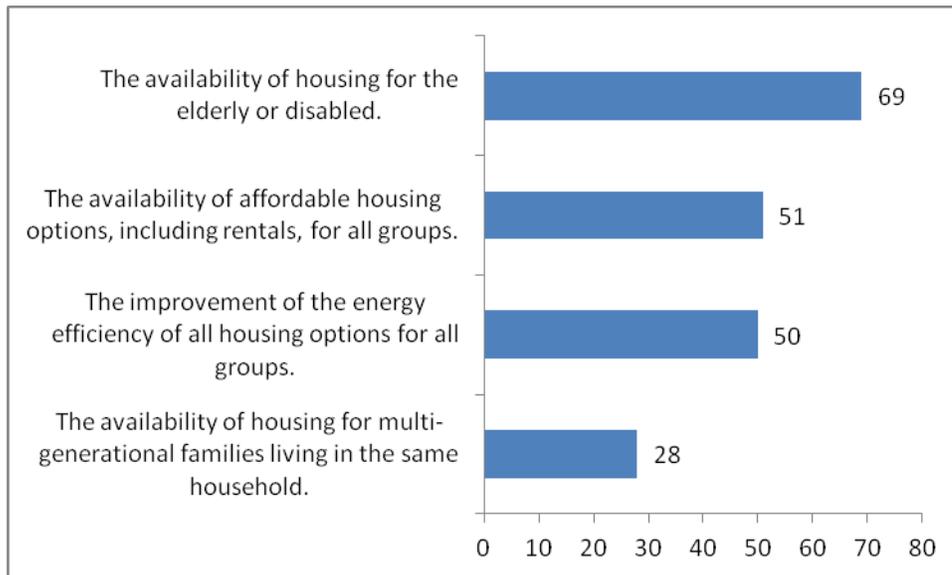


4

Housing

While affordable and accessible housing was not among the areas presented in the survey that received one of the highest percentages of “top priority” ratings among survey respondents, this area was still rated as a “top priority” by more than half (51%) of citizens. The survey instrument also included four individual questions related to housing for which respondents were to rank each item as a “top priority,” “somewhat of a priority,” “a low priority,” or “not a priority.” **Figure 11** depicts the findings for the individual survey items related to housing. Almost seven in ten respondents (69%) rated the availability of housing for the elderly or disabled as a “top priority” so this is clearly an area of interest among citizens. In contrast, fewer than one-third of respondents (28%) rated the availability of housing for multi-generational families living in the same household as a “top priority” for the valley.

Figure 11. Percentage of Respondents Rating Housing Areas as ‘Top Priority’

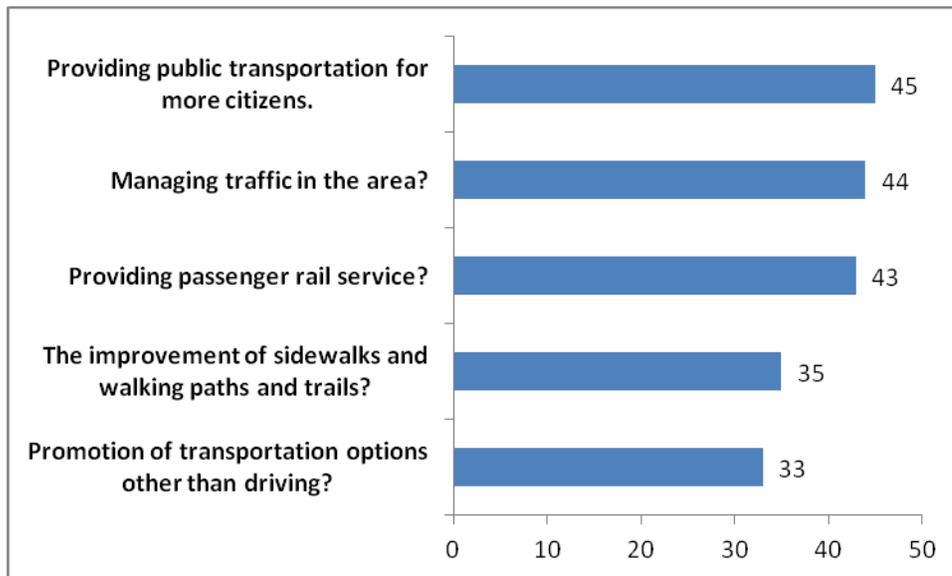


5

Transportation

Fewer than half of all survey respondents (47%) rated transportation as a “top priority” area for the Valley. The individual level survey items related to transportation were rated similarly with none of the five individual transportation items posed in the survey receiving more than 45 percent of respondents rating the area as a “top priority”. **Figure 12** depicts the results for the individual level transportation items included in the survey. Interestingly, among the transportation issues facing the Roanoke Valley, the provision of public transportation for more citizens seems to be the highest priority among citizens.

Figure 12. Percentage of Respondents Rating Transportation Areas as ‘Top Priority’



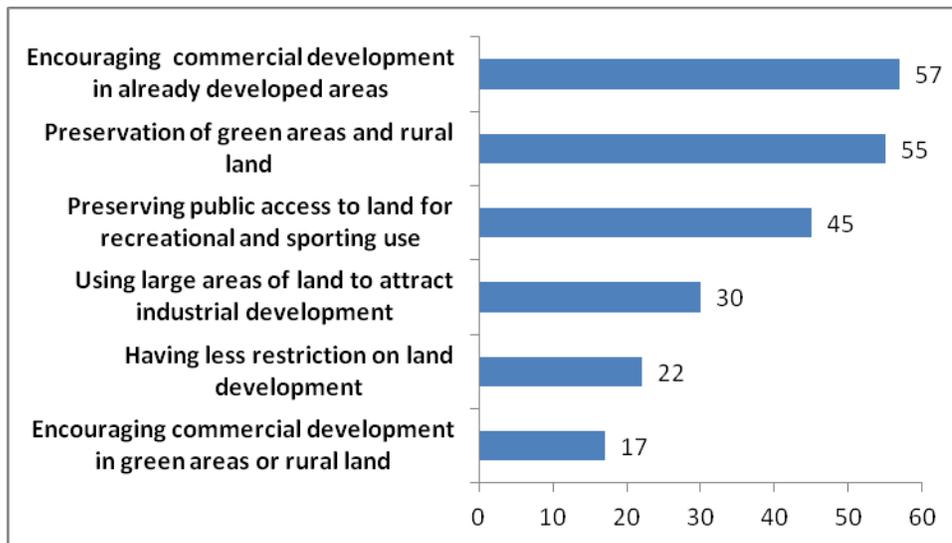
6

Land Usage

While the one item related to land usage included among the broad survey area items received among the lowest “top priority” ratings among respondents (25%), a higher number of respondents rated several of the individual level survey items related to land use included on the survey as “top priorities” for the region. For example, more than 50 percent of survey respondents (57%) rated “encouraging commercial development in existing communities, vacant buildings, and areas that already have development” as a “top priority.” However, far fewer survey respondents (17%) rated the encouragement of commercial development in green areas or rural land as a “top priority.” Therefore, it seems that citizens support development for commercial purposes in existing space rather than the expansion of development into previously

undeveloped areas such as rural land. **Figure 13** depicts the findings for the individual level survey items rated to land use.

Figure 13. Percentage of Respondents Rating Land Usage Areas as ‘Top Priority’

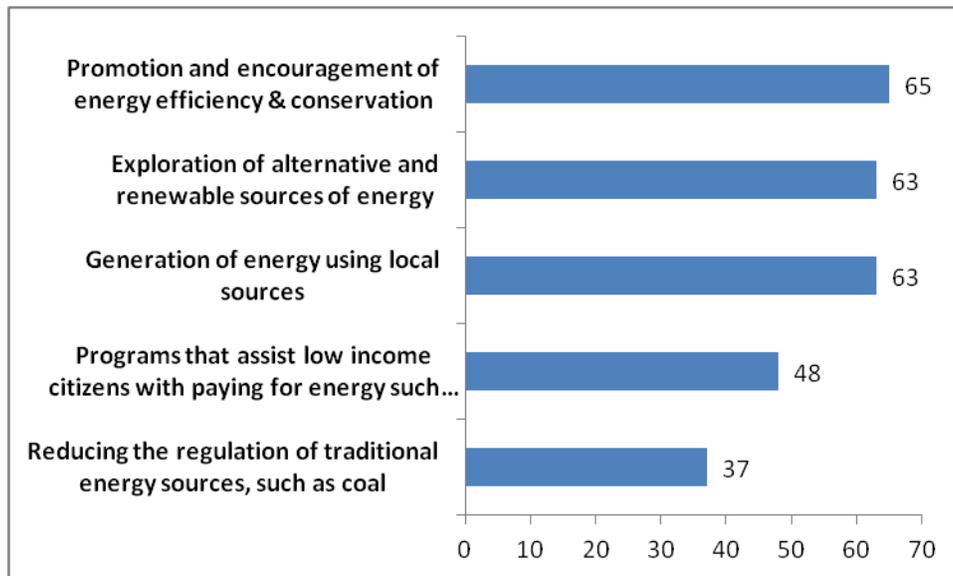


7

Energy

The area of energy efficiency and local energy sources was rated by almost seven in ten (68%) survey respondents as a “top priority” for the valley. None of the individual level survey items were priorities as highly by respondents. However, three of the specific energy-related survey items were rated by more than 60 percent of respondents as “top priorities” for the valley. **Figure 14** depicts the findings for the individual level survey items related to energy.

Figure 14. Percentage of Respondents Rating Energy Areas as ‘Top Priority’

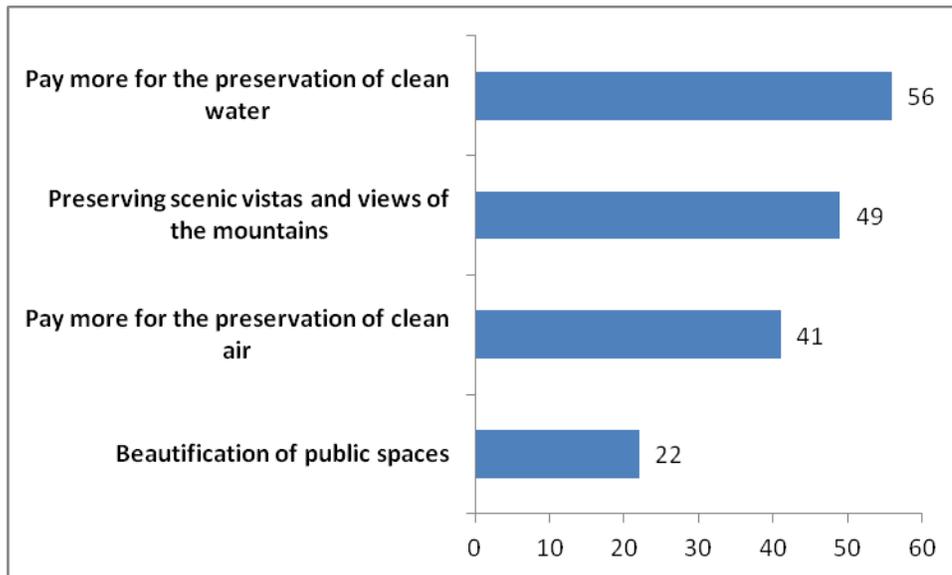


8

Environment

The area of clean water and air was the second highest general topic area on the entire survey with regard to being rated a “top priority” among citizens in the valley. Specifically, 85 percent of survey respondents rated clean water and air in the valley as a “top priority.” While the four individual items in the survey related to the environment did not receive as many “top priority” ratings among respondents, it is interesting that more than half of survey respondents (56%) rated “paying more for the preservation of clean water” as a “top priority.” This is surprising in that citizens think clean water is such a high priority area that they even think paying more for this is a “top priority.” **Figure 15** depicts the findings for the individual level survey items related to the environment.

Figure 15. Percentage of Respondents Rating Environment Areas as ‘Top Priority’

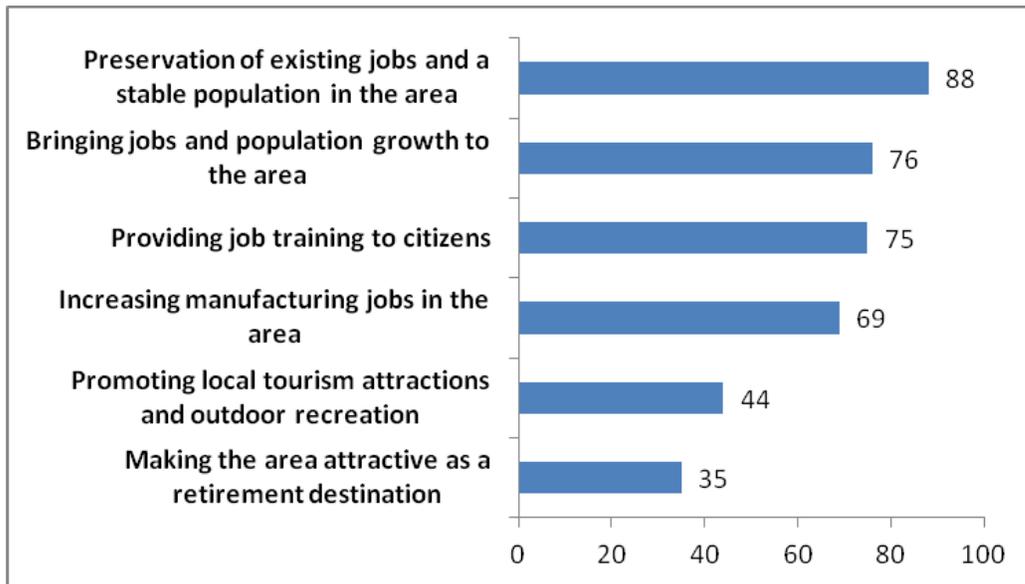


9

Jobs and Economic Development

The area of jobs and economic development was by far the top priority area for respondents to the survey. Not only was the area of “economic development, job creation and keeping jobs in the area” the top priority general level area among respondents with 92 percent of respondents rating this area as a “top priority,” but four of the specific job-related survey items received more than 60 percent “top priority” ratings among respondents. Maintaining existing jobs and population in the area was of particular interest among survey respondents with 88 percent of respondents rating this as a “top priority.” **Figure 16** depicts the individual level survey item findings related to jobs and the economy in the valley.

Figure 16. Percentage of Respondents Rating Jobs and Economic Development Areas as ‘Top Priority’



The general level survey item that asked respondents to rate the priority level of “economic development, job creation, and keeping jobs in the area” received more than 90 percent “top priority” ratings among respondents in all the geographic areas included in the survey. Thus, jobs and economic development are the top priority areas in all of the localities in the valley. The “top priority” ratings for this item ranged from 91 percent in the City of Roanoke to 96 percent in Craig County.

The individual level survey item ratings of “top priority” for “the preservation of existing jobs and a stable population in the area” ranged from 85 percent in Botetourt County to 92 percent in the City of Salem. The individual level survey item ratings of “bringing jobs and population growth to the area” ranged from 66 percent in Botetourt County to 82 percent in the City of Roanoke. Therefore, in Botetourt County, the preservation of existing jobs is far more of a priority among citizens than bringing new jobs and population growth to the area. For the

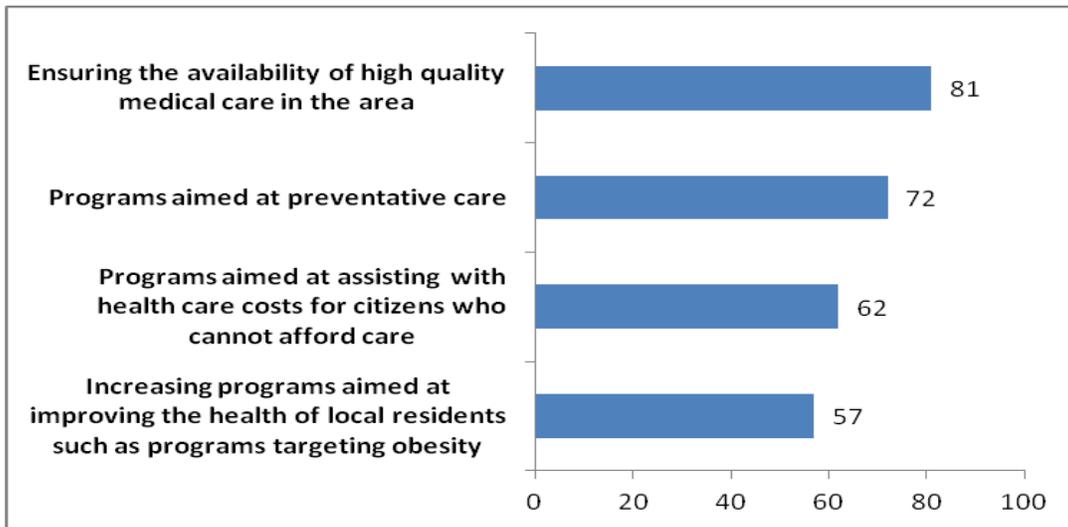
item “providing job training to citizens” the “top priority” ratings ranged from 73 percent in Franklin County to 80 percent in the City of Roanoke. Therefore, job training and bringing new jobs and population to the area are all “top priority” areas for citizens in the City of Roanoke. With regard to increasing manufacturing jobs in the area, the survey ratings of this area being a “top priority” ranged from 60 percent in Botetourt County to 75 percent in Franklin County. Respondent ratings of the promotion of local tourism attractions and outdoor recreation as a “top priority” ranged from 36 percent in the City of Salem to 53 percent in the City of Roanoke. Whereas the ratings of making the area attractive as a retirement destination ranged from 25 percent in Botetourt County to 40 percent in the City of Roanoke.

10

Health

The area of preventative health care and lowering health care costs was the general area on the survey receiving the third highest (out of twelve areas) number of “top priority” ratings on the survey. Likewise, the four individual level health care survey items all received relatively high percentages of “top priority” ratings compared to other items on the survey. Indeed, more than 80 percent (81%) of survey respondents rated “ensuring the availability of high quality medical care in the area” as a “top priority.” **Figure 17** depicts the findings for the individual level survey items related to health.

Figure 17. Percentage of Respondents Rating Health Areas as ‘Top Priority’

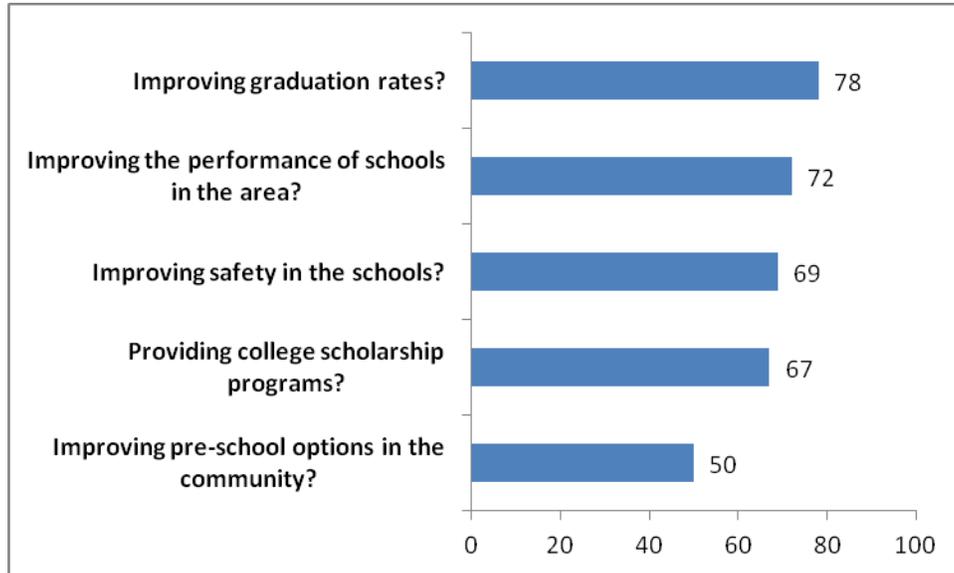


11

Education

Slightly more than three fourths (76%) of survey respondents rated “educational options and academic performance” in the valley as a “top priority.” Findings for the five specific survey items related to education that were included in the survey also reflect the high priority of education among citizens in the Valley. Indeed, all of the individual level survey items related to education that were included in the survey received a “top priority” rating among at least 50 percent of respondents. Indeed, four of the survey items related to education received a rating of “top priority” among nearly or more than 70 percent of survey respondents. **Figure 18** depicts the findings for the individual level survey items related to education.

Figure 18. Percentage of Respondents Rating Education Areas as ‘Top Priority’



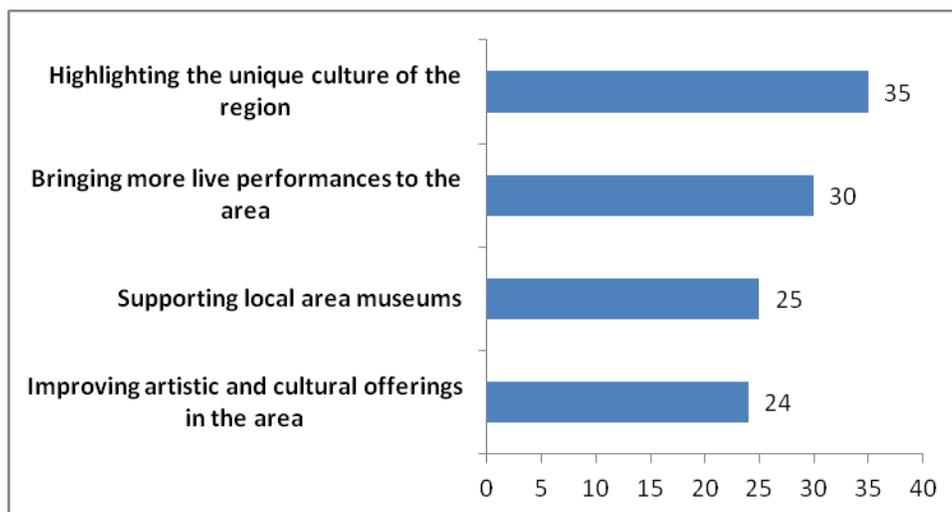
12

Arts and Culture

The area of local arts and culture received the lowest number of “top priority” ratings among the general areas included on the survey with 23 percent of respondents rating this area as a “top priority.” However, all of the individual level survey items related to arts and culture included on the survey received slightly higher percentages of respondents rating these areas as a “top priority” for the valley. The arts and culture area receiving the highest percentage of “top priority” ratings on the survey is the area “highlighting the unique culture of the region.”

Figure 19 depicts the survey findings for the individual level survey items related to arts and culture.

Figure 19. Percentage of Respondents Rating Arts and Culture Areas as ‘Top Priority’

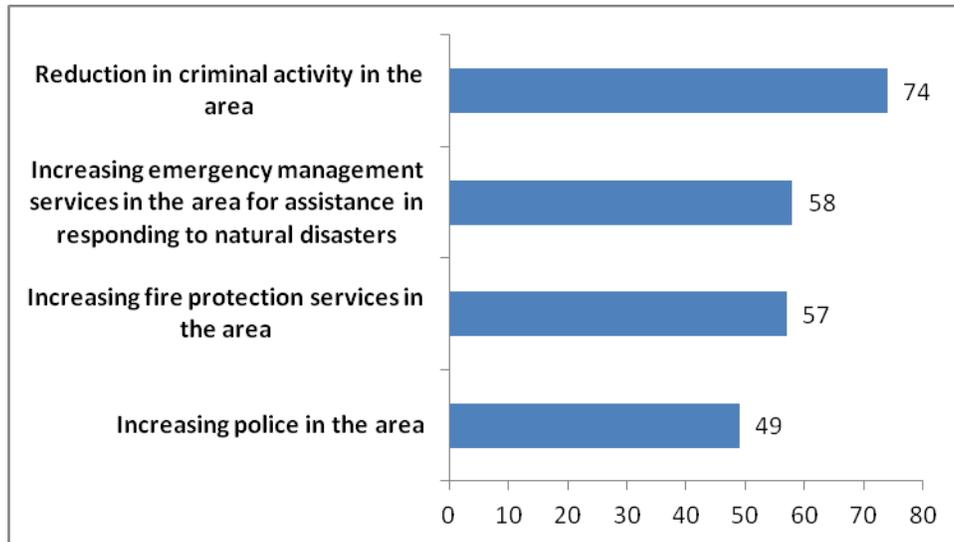


13

Safety

Three-fourths (75%) of survey respondents rated “fire and police services” as a “top priority” for the Valley but the priority ratings of the four individual survey items related to safety varied among respondents. For example, fewer survey respondents (49%) see increasing police in the area as a “top priority” than an overall reduction in criminal activity in the area (74% “top priority” rating). **Figure 20** depicts the findings for the individual level survey items related to safety.

Figure 20. Percentage of Respondents Rating Safety Areas as ‘Top Priority’



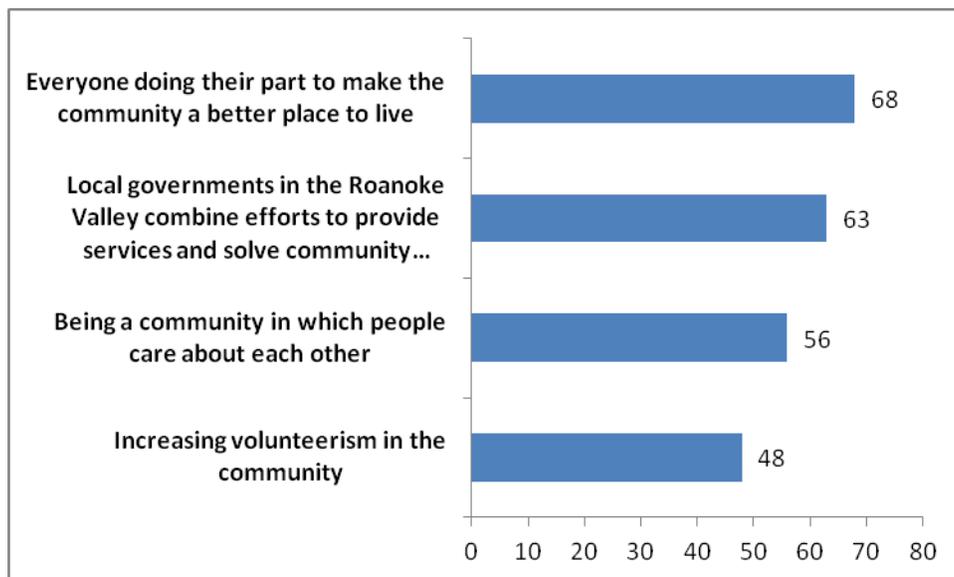
14

Bringing People Together for a Sense of Community

While “bringing people together for a sense of community” was not one of the areas rated most frequently by respondents as a “top priority” for the valley, some of the individual survey items related to this aspect of the community did receive more ratings of “top priority.” Specifically, many survey respondents indicated on the survey that they think community members should help one another. For example, 48 percent of survey respondents said that “increasing volunteerism in the community” is a “top priority,” 56 percent of survey respondents said that “being a community in which people care about each other” should be a “top priority” for the valley, and a full 68 percent of respondents said that “everyone doing their part to make the community a better place to live” should be a “top priority.” Survey respondents also seemed to favor local governments in the Roanoke Valley combining efforts,

with 63 percent of respondents saying “local governments in the Roanoke Valley combining efforts to provide services and solve community challenges” should be a “top priority.” **Figure 21** depicts the findings for these survey items.

Figure 21. Percentage of Respondents Rating Aspects of ‘Bringing People Together for a Sense of Community’ as ‘Top Priority’



15

Overall Ranking of Individual Priority Area Survey Items

The ranking of highest to lowest percentages of respondents rating an individual level survey item aspect as a “top priority” appears in **Table 2**. The preservation of existing jobs and a stable population in the area is the highest rated individual aspect included on the survey with regard to it being a “top priority” among survey respondents.

Table 2. Overall Ranking of Individual Priority Area Survey Items

Preservation of existing jobs and a stable population in the area	87.9
Ensuring the availability of high quality medical care in the area	81.3
Improving graduation rates	77.8
Bringing jobs and population growth to the area	75.8
Providing job training to citizens	74.7
Reduction in criminal activity in the area	74.4
Programs aimed at preventative care	71.9
Improving the performance of schools in the area	71.9
The availability of housing for the elderly or disabled	69.4
Improving safety in the schools	69.4
Increasing manufacturing jobs in the area	69.2
Everyone doing their part to make the community a better place to live	68.3
Providing college scholarship programs	67.0
Promotion and encouragement of energy efficiency and conservation	64.9
Generation of energy using local sources	63.5
Exploration of alternative and renewable sources of energy	63.2
Local governments in Valley combine efforts to provide services/solve community challenges	63.0
Programs aimed at assisting with health care costs for citizens who cannot afford care	62.3
Increasing emergency mgmt. services in the area for assistance in responding to natural disasters	58.2
Increasing programs aimed at improving health of local residents such as programs targeting obesity	57.4
Increasing fire protection services in the area	57.0
Encouraging commercial dev. in existing communities, vacant buildings, areas that already have dev.	56.7
Pay more for the preservation of clean water	56.1
Being a community in which people care about each other	55.6
Preservation of green areas and rural land	54.8
The availability of affordable housing options, including rentals, for all groups	50.8
The improvement of the energy efficiency of all housing options for all groups	49.7
Improving pre-school options in the community	49.6
Increasing police in the area	49.4
Preserving scenic vistas and views of the mountains	49.2
Programs that assist low income citizens with paying for energy such as heating and cooling	48.2
Increasing volunteerism in the community	47.9
Preserving public access to land for recreational and sporting use	45.2
Providing public transportation for more citizens	45.0
Managing traffic in the area	44.2
Promoting local tourism attractions and outdoor recreation	43.6

Providing passenger rail service	42.9
Pay more for the preservation of clean air	40.6
Reducing the regulation of traditional energy sources, such as coal	37.1
The improvement of sidewalks and walking paths and trails	35.2
making the area attractive as a retirement destination	34.9
Highlighting the unique culture of the region	34.6
Promotion of transportation options other than driving	33.2
Bringing more live performances to the area	30.2
Using large areas of land to attract industrial development	29.9
The availability of housing for multi-generational families living in the same household	27.9
Supporting local area museums	25.0
Improving artistic and cultural offerings in the area	24.0
Beautification of public spaces	21.9
Having less restriction on land development	21.7
Encouraging commercial development in green areas or rural land	17.2

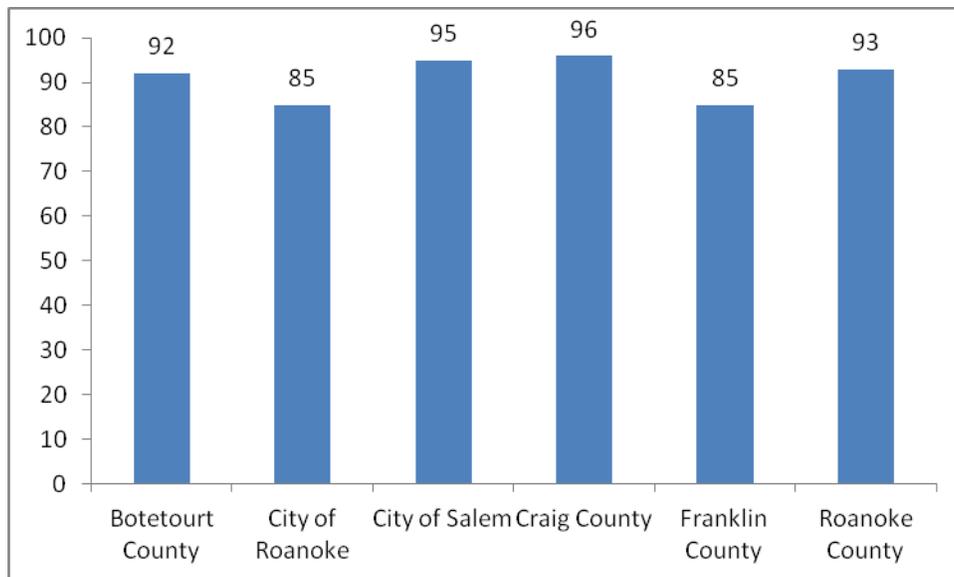
16

Quality of Life

Survey respondents were asked how they would rate the quality of life in the Roanoke Valley overall. Most respondents rated the quality of life favorably with 33 percent selecting the category ‘excellent’ and 57 percent selecting the category ‘good’ to describe the quality of life in the Roanoke Valley. While the majority of survey respondents rated quality of life in the valley favorably, there were differences in the ratings of quality of life among respondents with different demographic characteristics. Survey respondents younger than 46 years of age rated quality of life in the valley less favorably than those aged 46-85. However, respondents aged 86 or older were more similar to respondents aged younger than 46. Respondents who were more concerned about economic development, job creation and keeping jobs in the area as indicated by their rating of this aspect of the valley as a “top priority” were less likely to rate quality of life in the valley as “excellent” than those respondents who rated this aspect of life in the valley

as only “somewhat of a priority.” **Figure 22** depicts the quality of life ratings among respondents in the different localities included in the survey. Responses of “excellent” and “good” are combined for presentation in the figure. Respondents in the City of Roanoke and Franklin County were the least favorable with regard to quality of life in the Roanoke Valley.

Figure 22. Percentage of Respondents Rating Quality of Life in the Roanoke Valley as ‘Excellent’ or ‘Good’



17

Responses to Open-ended Survey Items

Two open-ended survey items were included in the survey. Respondents were asked what they like best about living in the Roanoke Valley. The most common themes among the responses to this survey item were related to the beauty of the area such as the mountains and the views/scenery. The people in the community and the size and character of the community



were also common responses to this question. Respondents were also asked what they think the greatest challenge for the Roanoke Valley is in the next few years. The most common responses to this survey item were related to jobs and the economy. Transportation and education were also frequently cited in response to this survey item. The open-ended responses to both of these survey items were grouped into themes and then quantified. Word clouds with the themes shown in relative size to the frequency of response are provided in *Appendix E*. *Appendix F* provides a listing of the open-ended responses by respondent locality.

18

Data Storage

SPSS and Excel datasets from which the data in this summary report were derived accompanies this report in electronic format. All electronic files of the survey instrument, report, tabulations and presentations related to the data are the property of the Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission. However, the Center for Survey Research will retain copies of all project materials for a period of at least one year. No information from this survey will be shared by the CSR with anyone other than project team members from the Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission without the express permission of that office.