



# REGIONAL FORUM SERIES 1

## *Union County*

### *Idea Consolidation Record*

This document shows how similar ideas created at each table were combined for keypad polling. These ideas were quickly combined during the meeting to allow for shorter lists to poll upon, so they were a best effort to get the intention of the ideas provided. In some cases, the exact wording of one idea was used because it best captured the intention of all similar ideas.

For some meetings, the ideas were too different to combine enough to fit on one slide, and there is a longer list, split between two slides. Remember, the polling prioritization provides only a snapshot of priorities of those in the room, not a conclusive vote on any ideas.

In the lists below, the summary idea is in bold, with the similar ideas that were combined into the summary idea below. The summary ideas are the ones that were used for keypad polling.

## Union County

### Regional Strengths

**Well developed infrastructure including rail network, interstates, river ports**

**Availability of resources - things people like to do, what people need (healthcare and jobs); within one hour drive**

**Publicly managed land is an asset and an economic driver.**

**Small, rural feel but near major metro area**

- Small, rural feel but near major metro area

**Moderate weather**

- Moderate weather

**Access to pristine lakes, mountains and parks, esp. Smokey Mts.**

- Smokey Mountains National Park, State parks, variety of lakes
- Access to lake, views and mountains, including state & national parks - bass fishing, fly fishing, hiking
- Mountains and lakes are pristine as comparison to other areas in East Tennessee.
- Lakes, mountains and parks

**Robust scientific and research community (federal and universities)**

- Strength of science, diversity, research in UT, Oak Ridge
- Robust scientific community (federal and universities).

**Access to quality public and higher education**

- Access to quality public & higher education, UT, Carson Neman, Tusculum, ETSU, Walters State, Pellissippi State, Roane State

## Regional Challenges

**Unequal opportunities for advancement throughout East Tennessee due to amount of isolation that exists**

**Environmental problems, lack of attainment of air quality standards, putting RAD waste in landfills in Oak Ridge**

**Lack of regional leadership to get sustainable energy (including TVA)**

**Reluctance to change**

- Lack of regional mass transit

**Decent jobs are far away and it requires long travel times.**

- Lack of jobs

**Balance between economic development and preservation of natural resources (lakes, ridges, streams, air).**

- Lack of values for education, no uniform education, education system archaic, need a charter or multiple charter schools
- Alcohol and drug abuse, tearing apart families, destroying futures
- No industry or job opportunities, 64 percent work out of the county
- Union County; long distances between towns

**Urban areas get more funding and planning attention than smaller rural areas: have to fight for funding opportunities**

- Insufficient Infrastructure, water/sewer, roads, schools, broadband

**Hard to inform the rest of the country of the regional assets; natural beauty, job opps, cost of living; hard to break old stereotypes**

**Major health problems incl. obesity, tobacco use, drug abuse, which are a drain on the economy**

- Unhealthy choices and unhealthy behaviors
- Regional health - drug abuse is a problem (meth), obesity - exacerbated by lack of education
- Major health problems: obesity, tobacco use, drug abuse and trafficking - economic drain on the economy