



Region 9 Prosperity Initiative Summit

Monday, November 16, 2015

Washtenaw Community College, Ann Arbor, MI

Summary

Welcoming Session

Conan Smith, Washtenaw County Commissioner and Region 9 Management Team member, kicked off the Summit with a welcome to all participants.

The session began with a short and engaging video that highlighted some of the accomplishments and benefits of the Region 9 collaboration. The video is available for viewing here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q4keM_10KfU&feature=youtu.be.

Project Spotlight: Advanced Manufacturing Credentials

Tina Matz, from Jackson College, gave a brief overview of a project (funded with a Region 9 Challenge Grant) to create advanced manufacturing credentials. Jackson College is partnering with the Southeast Michigan Workforce Consortium to research, identify, and develop a short-term industry-recognized credential that will meet the newly defined completion requirements for on-the-job training. Working through an advisory committee comprised of regional industry employers, the team will develop training and credentialing that is industry recognized, stackable, portable, and accredited. The project began in late 2015 and will be implemented by mid-2016.

Panel Discussion: Models of Regional Collaboration

Conan Smith moderated an interactive panel of three engaging leaders who have been tackling the issue of regional collaboration and prosperity for many years:

- Marsha Smith, Executive Director, Rotary Charities of Traverse City (and co-chair of The Grand Vision regional collaboration)
- Michael Langley, CEO, Greater MSP (Minneapolis-Saint Paul)
- Jay Foran, CEO, Team NEO (Northeast Ohio)

Each of the panelists shared their thoughts and experiences on different models of regional collaboration—from the very grassroots Grand Vision to the more formal Greater MSP organization. Some of the key messages from the panelists included:

- Partnerships must include broad stakeholder participation, but it is particularly critical to have business and industry engaged in regional collaboration efforts in order to get buy-

in and ensure that regional policies, economic development efforts, education, and workforce training are responsive to business needs

- Collaborations can be formal or more informal (i.e., elected or appointed boards that vote), and both can work. However, when informal, a responsible party is required to begin the process
- Communication is critical—people need to feel engaged in order to value the collaboration
- Sometimes, mobilizing around a specific issue or project is the most effective way to get engagement and buy-in to the process
- Measure and report on progress and achievements whenever possible

After the panel discussion, Public Sector Consultants (PSC) led the group in an exercise to get a sense of stakeholders' thoughts on various types of collaboration models and structures. Each of the participants was provided a remote polling "clicker"¹, and PSC asked a series of questions related to the value and structure of different types of collaborative efforts. The full results of this survey are included in Appendix A. Below are some of the key findings regarding the participants' opinions on the various organizational frameworks for regional collaboration efforts:

- 75.5 percent of summit participants *agreed* or *strongly agreed* with the Region's need for a unified external voice and brand
 - Participants believe that the most beneficial reasons to have a unified external voice and brand are:
 - Better marketing of the region to companies and talent (32.65 percent)
 - Better buy-in for a consistent regional vision (24.5 percent)
 - Better access to financial resources for implementing the Prosperity Strategy (20.4 percent)
 - Improved national/global competitiveness (12.2 percent)
 - Stronger role in shaping state and national policy (10.2 percent)
- 85.7 percent of summit participants *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that the regional partnership framework must have a strong leadership team that helps focus partner efforts and move the Prosperity Strategy forward
 - Participants believe that the Region 9 organizational framework should take the form(s) of:
 - A regional council (28.6 percent)
 - An advisory group (21.4 percent)
 - A funding/implementation organization (14.3 percent)
 - A management team (14.3 percent)
 - A board of directors (12.2 percent)
 - A stakeholder networking forum (5.1 percent)
 - Organic partnerships (4.1 percent)

¹ Polling clickers are devices that are connected remotely to an online poll/survey that a facilitator is controlling. Participants use the clicker to vote for their preferred answers to polling questions and the group's responses are included and displayed online in real time.

- 82.0 percent of summit participants *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that the regional leadership must include representatives from business, government, and nongovernmental sectors
- The components most critical for partner trust and engagement in the Region 9 collaboration are:
 - Inclusiveness of all stakeholders (31.5 percent)
 - The efficient use of time and resources (26.1 percent)
 - Transparency (25.0 percent)
 - Visionary and aspirational (17.4 percent)

In addition, PSC used the poll to ask participants about the primary purpose, or function, of a formal regional collaboration structure. Participants were asked whether they agreed, strongly agreed, disagreed, strongly disagreed or were undecided about the following four statements:

Purpose/function	Percent agreed or strongly agreed
Support the implementation of Region 9 strategies by sharing and distributing relevant regional information	90.0 percent
Implement the Region 9 strategies by providing networking opportunities	83.7 percent
Support organizations' implementation of Region 9 strategies by aggregating and directing funding/resources	62.5 percent
Prioritize the direction for <i>Prosperity Strategy</i> implementation	61.2 percent

Project Spotlight: Software Talent Attraction and Retention program

Phil Santer, from Ann Arbor SPARK, provided the participants with some highlights of a second challenge grant funding project—the Software Talent Attraction and Retention (STAR) program. The STAR program’s purpose is to increase the depth and pipeline of critical software development and engineering talent in the region by:

- Hosting quarterly talent attraction events with existing software talent
- Inviting selected graduating college students to STAR recruitment days, where they will meet with regional technology leaders who will help sell the region. These students will also be provided with a mentor and welcome program of monthly events for one year upon joining their employer
- Matching college juniors with regional employers for internships
- Creating a sophomore rotational program of mini-internships at regional employers where students will work with a mentor and participate in programs to become familiar with the opportunities in software development and engineering in the region

Priorities for 2016

In advance of the Summit, PSC sent out a survey to participants which provided information on the Region 9 Five-year Prosperity Strategy and asked questions regarding what types of activities

regional partners should pursue in 2016 to advance the goals therein. Survey respondents identified the following priorities:

For talent, two priority areas were identified as major concerns:

- All levels of education—including K–12, career and technical education (CTE), college and adult—use a common career pathway model to align and integrate their curricula and career experiences (i.e., internships) to enable all learners to efficiently achieve their educational and career goals.
 - 83 percent of respondents listed this as a top-two priority area
- Develop and implement a comprehensive career awareness campaign and expand experiential learning opportunities so that all stakeholders, including students, parents, teachers, counselors, service providers, and employers, are aware of high-demand occupations in the region, and understand the skills and credentials needed to find gainful employment.
 - 74 percent of respondents listed this as a two priority area

For transportation, three priority areas were identified as major concerns:

- Address aging infrastructure and transportation maintenance so that the national and statewide corridors of highest significance in the region offer safe travel for all modes of transportation.
 - 57 percent of respondents listed this as a top-two priority area
- Stakeholders work together to expand and diversify transportation funding in the region in order to ensure that the region offers high-quality, diverse transportation systems.
 - 52 percent of respondents listed this as a top-two priority area
- A highly accessible, excellent-quality network of nonautomobile options is available to transport people and goods within and through the region, including freight and rail passenger transportation as well as bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.
 - 52 percent of respondents listed this as a top-two priority area

At the Summit, we presented the findings from the survey and asked participants to vote with their remote clickers on which three or four goal areas regional partners should focus on in 2016. Respondents prioritized the three following areas:

- All levels of education—including K–12, CTE, and college and adult education—use a common career pathway model to align and integrate their curricula and career-related experiences to enable all learners to efficiently achieve their educational and career goals.
- All stakeholders, including students, parents, teachers, counselors, service providers, and employers, are aware of and exposed to high-demand and other occupations in the region, as well as the most important foundational and technical skills and credentials needed to find gainful employment.
- Transportation and land use planning will be collaborative and highly integrated within the region.

These three goal areas were the basis for afternoon breakout sessions.

Breakout Sessions: Goal Groups

After lunch, participants broke out into three rooms—one for each prioritized goal area. Participants were charged with identifying potential actions to include in the region’s 2016 Prosperity Initiative grant proposal.

Goal Group One: Common Career Pathway

Goal group one discussed some of the potential action items included in the Prosperity Strategy as well as some new ideas for advancing this goal area. The group also discussed how this goal area overlaps with the other priority goal areas. After discussing potential action areas for 2016, the group one identified two high-priority action areas:

- Integrating businesses into the process for aligning career pathways, and incorporate employer-driven curricula and education programs into common career pathway models. Potential actions for 2016 include developing and implementing annual employer surveys, expanding internships and job shadowing, and finding ways to engage businesses in school programs and training.
- Incorporating stackable credentials and dual enrollments into the career pathway model. The group discussed the importance of and opportunities for working with businesses to establish industry-endorsed credentials, and to review national research, and to adopt best practices.

Goal Group Two: Expand Awareness of Career Opportunities

Goal group two discussed many options for potential activities to help expand student, parent, teacher, and counselor awareness of the benefits and opportunities for high-demand occupations in the region as well as the related education and training needed to pursue those careers. There was significant discussion about which grade levels to target for information regarding career opportunities, and all agreed that aiming as early as seventh and eighth grade is important. Some of the priority actions identified for 2016 included:

- Ensuring strong and current data on industry talent needs and finding ways to clearly and easily communicate that information to students. The Workforce Intelligence Network already collects and analyzes much of this data, so the group focused on ways to help get that information to students and parents more broadly, such as developing information sheets or marketing materials.
- Finding avenues through which to connect businesses with students, educators, and parents such as hosting reverse career fairs (i.e., students come to the business so they can see how the job/company functions).
- Having Michigan Works! Association staff visit schools to talk about in-demand career opportunities and training needs.
- Expanding and providing more hands-on assistance for the MI Bright Future Program, which is an online portal for connecting students with employers. It is currently being piloted in Livingston County, and in the communities where it is being utilized, it has been very successful. But the program would be enhanced with targeted assistance in increasing student sign-up. Participants also agreed that it would be good to expand the program to other counties in Region 9.

Goal Group Three: Integrated Transportation and Land Use Planning

Goal group three discussed several interesting ideas for 2016 actions, including addressing equitable deployment of transportation infrastructure, implementing new transportation technologies, providing monetary support for land use and transportation planning integration, evaluating and addressing gaps in public transit needs, and educating transportation providers regarding land use issues. Ultimately, the group focused on two priority areas for action in 2016:

- Leading implementation of budding technology such as autonomous vehicles. The region should research and evaluate some of the implications of autonomous vehicles on public transit, road and highway policies, and land-use planning. This might include examining what other states are doing; identifying key areas of technical, safety, funding and land-use concerns; and outlining recommended strategies for addressing and leading on these policy issues.
- Supporting a public transportation needs assessment to identify gaps in public transit. This would build on the work done in 2015 to evaluate the transportation needs of the regional workforce. In 2016, the region could map the current public transit system against employment clusters, identify key parts of the region that are not served by multiple transportation options, and evaluate policies and investments that could address these gaps.

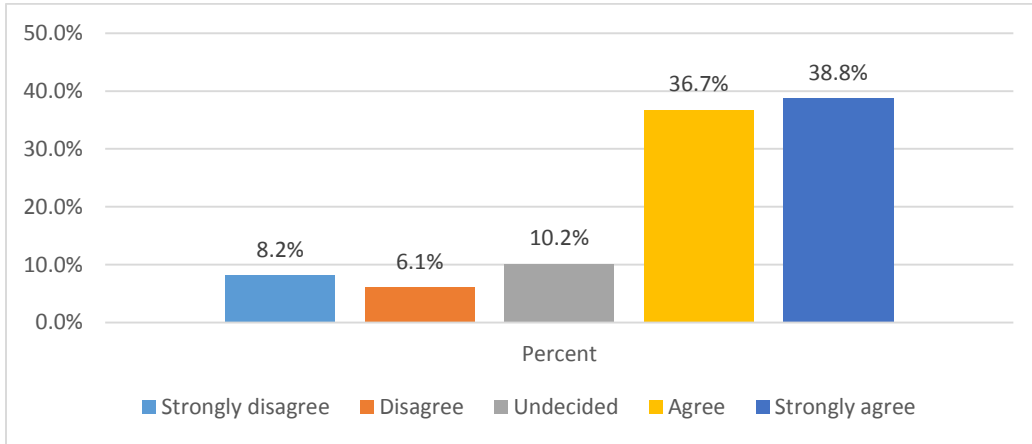
Closing Session

The goal groups reconvened in the plenary room at the end of the day, and Conan Smith highlighted next steps for the R9 Prosperity Initiative, including:

- Submission of a grant application for 2016 to the state, based on some of the priority actions identified by the goal teams
- Establishment of workgroups in 2016 for the projects/activities that are funded through that grant
- Reconvening as a large group early in the second quarter of 2016 to discuss recommended approaches for a regional implementation structure

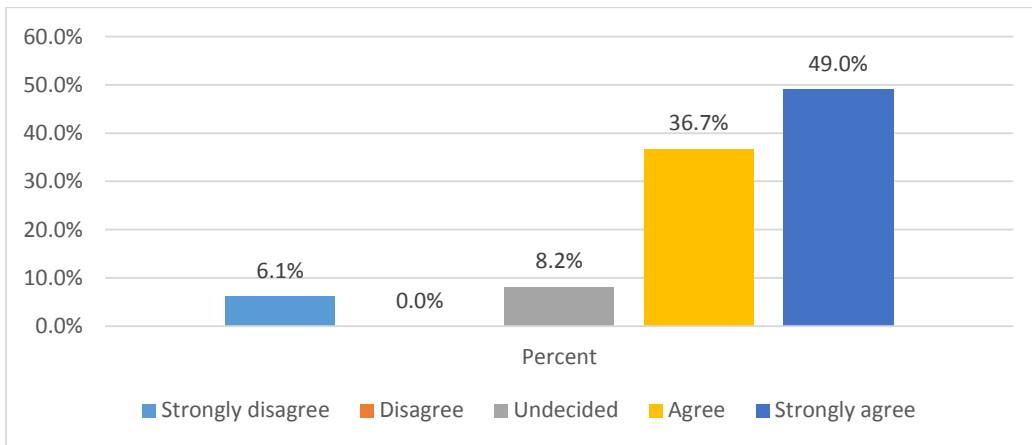
Appendix A. Survey Results

Statement 1: It is important for the region's prosperity that we have a unified external voice and brand.



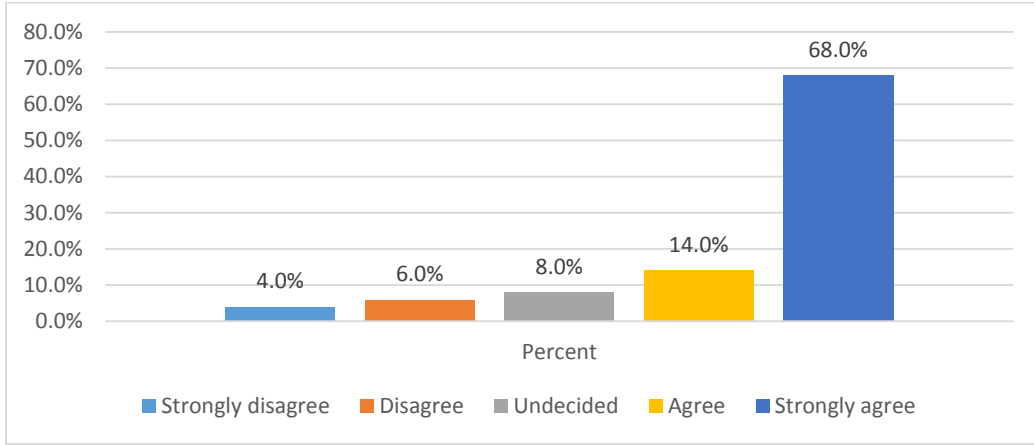
Response	Percent	Count
Strongly disagree	8.2%	4
Disagree	6.1%	3
Undecided	10.2%	5
Agree	36.7%	18
Strongly agree	38.8%	19

Statement 2: A regional partnership framework must have a strong leadership team that keeps regional partners focused and helps move the Prosperity forward.



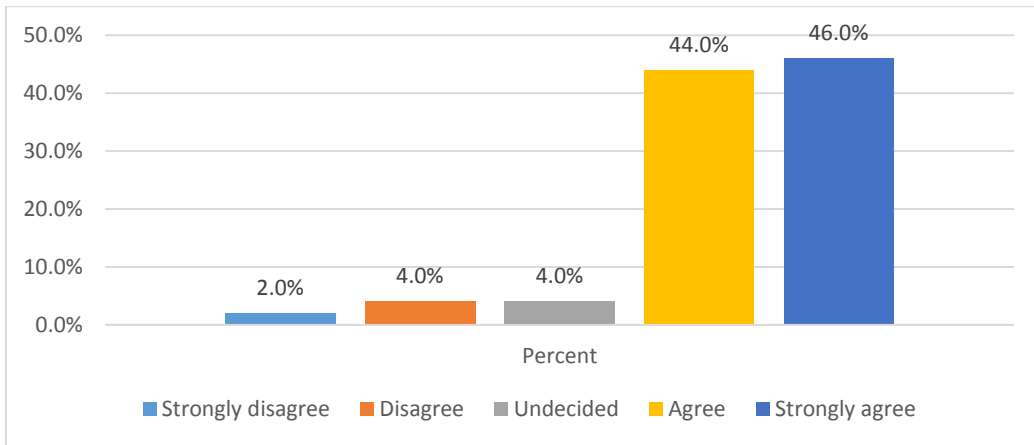
Response	Percent	Count
Strongly disagree	6.1%	3
Disagree	0.0%	0
Undecided	8.2%	4
Agree	36.7%	18
Strongly agree	49.0%	24

Statement 3: A regional leadership team must include representatives of business, government, and non-governmental sectors in our region.



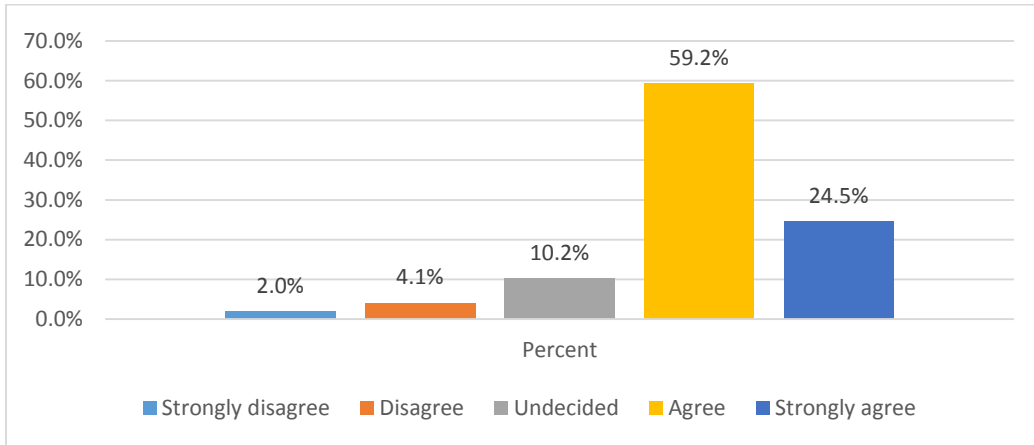
Response	Percent	Count
Strongly disagree	4.0%	2
Disagree	6.0%	3
Undecided	8.0%	4
Agree	14.0%	7
Strongly agree	68.0%	34

Statement 4: A regional partnership framework should support the implementation of Region 9 strategies by sharing and distributing relevant regional information.



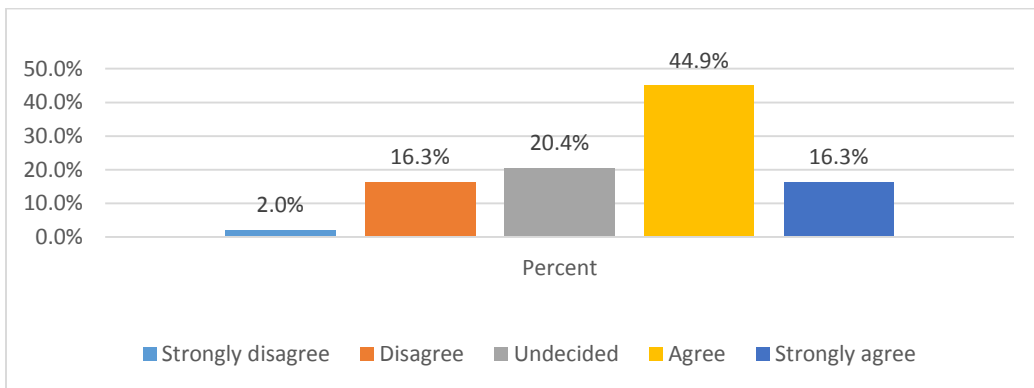
Response	Percent	Count
Strongly disagree	2.0%	1
Disagree	4.0%	2
Undecided	4.0%	2
Agree	44.0%	22
Strongly agree	46.0%	23

Statement 5: A regional partnership framework should support your organization's implementation of Region 9 strategies by providing networking opportunities.



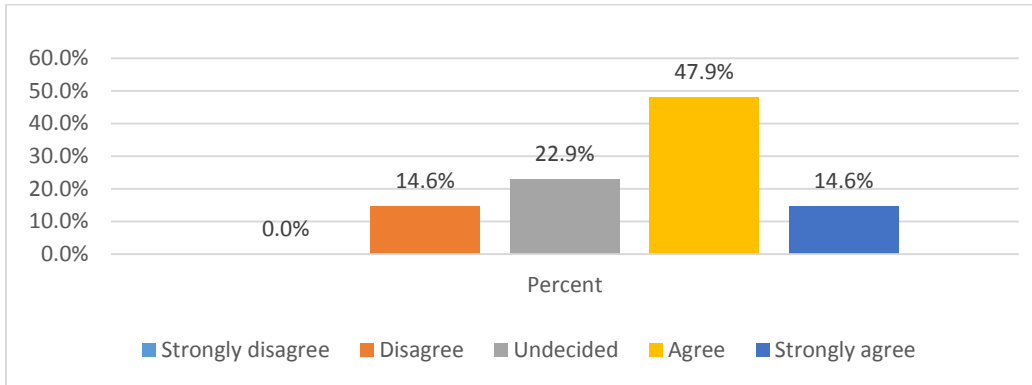
Response	Percent	Count
Strongly disagree	2.0%	1
Disagree	4.1%	2
Undecided	10.2%	5
Agree	59.2%	29
Strongly agree	24.5%	12

Statement 6: A regional partnership framework should support Region 9 strategy implementation by focusing and/or prioritizing the direction for implementing the Prosperity Strategy.



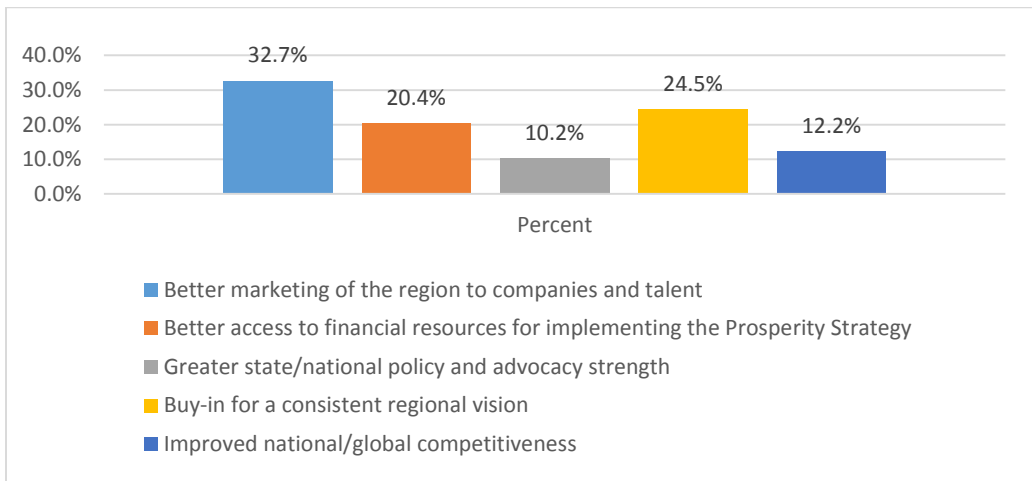
Response	Percent	Count
Strongly disagree	2.0%	1
Disagree	16.3%	8
Undecided	20.4%	10
Agree	44.9%	22
Strongly agree	16.3%	8

Statement 7: A regional partnership framework should support Region 9 strategy implementation by aggregating and directing funding and resources.



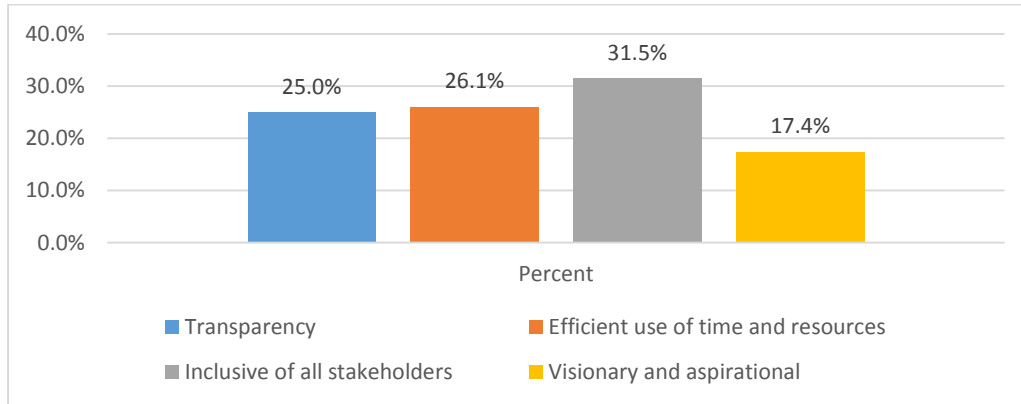
Response	Percent	Count
Strongly disagree	0.0%	0
Disagree	14.6%	7
Undecided	22.9%	11
Agree	47.9%	23
Strongly agree	14.6%	7

Question 8: What is the most beneficial reason to have a regional, unified external voice and brand?



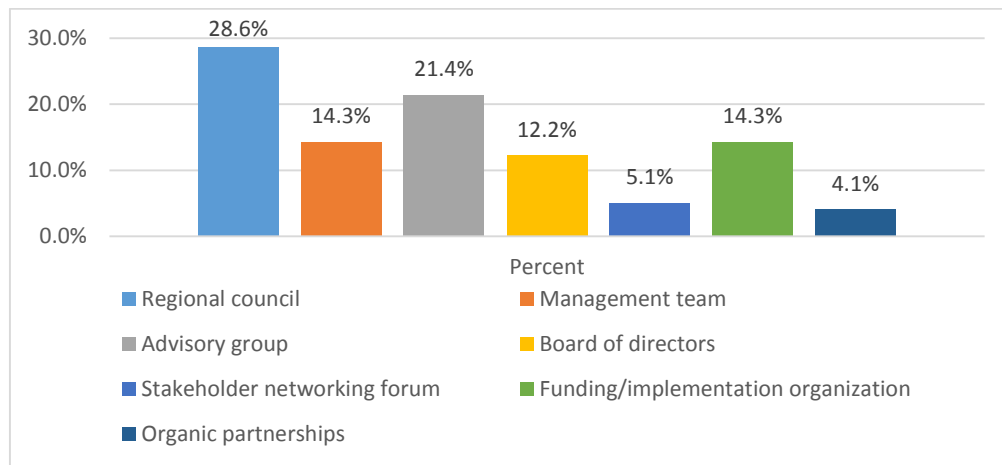
Response	Percent	Count
Better marketing of the region to companies and talent	32.7%	16
Better access to financial resources for implementing the Prosperity Strategy	20.4%	10
Greater state/national policy and advocacy strength	10.2%	5
Buy-in for a consistent regional vision	24.5%	12
Improved national/global competitiveness	12.2%	6

Question 9: What components of a regional partnership are most critical for your trust and engagement in the process?



Response	Percent	Count
Transparency	25.0%	23
Efficient use of time and resources	26.1%	24
Inclusive of all stakeholders	31.5%	29
Visionary and aspirational	17.4%	16

Question 10: What words or phrases best match your vision of an organizational framework for implementing the Prosperity Strategy?



Response	Percent	Count
Regional council	28.6%	28
Management team	14.3%	14
Advisory group	21.4%	21
Board of directors	12.2%	12
Stakeholder networking forum	5.1%	5
Funding/implementation organization	14.3%	14
Organic partnerships	4.1%	4