



## Down East Carteret County, North Carolina Community Survey Results

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With the support of the Carteret County Economic Development Council and East Carolina University Municipal Management Institute the N.C. Division of Community Assistance is assisting Carteret County towns and areas with the development of economic development strategic plans to generate opportunities for new business investment, job creation, identify sites, and facilities, increase small business opportunities and generate retail sales. As part of this county-wide effort, Down East residents, business owners and non-residents were surveyed in April and May 2014. The purpose of the survey was to seek out economic development opportunities to improve communities in the region by inquiring about quality of life indicators, community sustainability topics and business related issues and concerns.

We are pleased to furnish an overview of the survey results. We presented preliminary survey results during a Down East Council meeting held at the Core Sound Waterfowl Museum and Heritage Center on May 5, 2014.

# Summary of the Final Community Survey Results

## Down East Carteret County, North Carolina

***Those surveyed?*** The survey was developed from a county template and customized for the Down East communities from residents' input comprising of; Karen Willis Amspacher, Barbara Garrity Blake, Tom Hesselink, Mark Hooper and Dr. James Morris, The survey was distributed via the internet and printed copies made available at local post offices. We wanted to get as many respondents as possible during the three week open period.

***How many and who responded?*** There were 1,060 responses to the survey; 972 on-line and 88 printed copies. Sixty percent stated they live in the Down East region, 20% in Carteret County outside the region, 12% outside Carteret County and 6% stated they were second homeowners.

From those respondents who live in the Down East region the proportion of responses by community were; 16% Harkers Island, 12% Otway, 11% Marshallberg, 10 % Davis and Atlantic,  $\geq 6\%$  Gloucester, Smyrna, Straits, Williston, Sea Level, Cedar Island and Bettie. The age group of respondents was 70% of and over the age of 30 years old and 30% less than 30 years old. Noted was a 9% response rate of the 12-17 age groups. Most respondents have lived, worked or owned property Down East for 11 or more years. Over 50% of households have 2-3 persons and almost 20% of the households have 4-5 persons.

***What are the economic development opportunities?*** Respondents living in and out of the Down East region expressed ways for economic development opportunities by voicing:

1. Quality of life indicators,
2. Community sustainability topics and
3. Business related issues and concerns.

**1. Quality of Life Indicators** most often chosen by respondents living in and out of the Down East region included these related categories; community and health, business and impending actions:

**a. Highest indicators for community and health related categories**

- i. **Housing and Infrastructure Improvements;** have better/improve roads, reduced flood insurance rates, control and manage commercial growth and water and sewer
- ii. **Economic Improvements;** improved public access for commercial fishing, increased awareness and access to seafood retail, more education and training facilities and more incentives for retail businesses
- iii. **Recreational Improvements;** bike lanes and walking trails, more or better parks and recreation facilities and more/improved public water access for recreation uses
- iv. **Other Improvements;** more community related events/activities, environmental stewardship and crime prevention

**b. Highest indicators for business related categories**

- i. Restaurants, community seafood market for public sales, farmers' / open air market, facilities to support the seafood industry, general merchandise stores and historical tours of important locations.

**c. Highest indicator for impending actions**

- i. **Very important** include supporting the traditional commercial fishing/boat building industries, preserving culture/heritage and environment also improving road safety

**2. Community Sustainability Topics** most often chosen by respondents living in and out of the Down East region included these topics; community and environmental sustainability, economic initiatives and social characteristics,

**a. Actions and preferences for community and environmental sustainability**

- i. Having a Down East “community's” newspaper and website, improve community’s appearance, provide land preservation information to property owners, educate the public of Down East heritage and have safe/healthy housing accessible for all.
- ii. The preferred choices of using environmental resources are; Cape Lookout Seashore, Core Sound, Core Sound Waterfowl Museum and Heritage Center, Core Banks and Shackleford Banks.

**b. Actions for economic initiatives for community sustainability**

- i. Have activities/entertainment for all ages, clean-up roadways/properties/environment, build up the commercial fishing industry, create more and better job opportunities, protecting the heritage and controlling crime/drugs

**c. Highest indicators voted for social characteristics in community sustainability**

- i. Maintaining the small town and rural feel, enjoying scenic views with family and friends living nearby thus maintaining a high sense of community

**3. Business Related Issues and Concerns** most important to respondents living in and out of the Down East region for economic development opportunities include:

**a. Most important**

- i. There are too many regulations and taxes, not enough people to support businesses, slow economy, lack of local support, loss of commercial fishing industry and heritage, high costs related to insurance and keeping a business open, need to improve roads, infrastructure including water and sewer, advertise/promote Down East, receive more support from county commissioners and the final issue of the need for more higher paying jobs

*Continuing analysis:* The results presented above are a summary of the main questions on our survey. Additional analysis is continuing and will be shared/discussed as the economic development strategic plan materializes.