

**#TAKE10CLT** 

# Evaluation Report

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Prepared for the City of Charlotte  
By the UNC Charlotte Urban Institute

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# Executive Summary

## Purpose

This evaluation report presents data related to the experiences of Take10CLT participants, including the Ambassadors, Team Leaders (who organized and supported groups of Ambassadors), the Take10CLT Leadership Team, and the citizens who were interviewed. Data are derived from multiple surveys, interviews, and focus groups. The primary goals of this evaluation are to

- assess what participants, both citizens and city employees, gained from the project, and
- determine what worked and did not work concerning the project's implementation.

## Successes

- Almost **2,500 conversations** were held with Charlotte citizens. If each conversation took ten minutes, this amounts to **over 400 hours** of time spent communicating with community members.
- **42 Ambassadors** met or exceeded the goal of 36 conversations in 36 weeks. 24 Ambassadors completed more than 36 conversations.
- Ambassadors reported **high satisfaction** with both their experience in the project and the quality of the conversations they had.
- Ambassadors **learned about what Charlotte citizens are interested in** and took away new perspectives and ideas.
- Ambassadors were **more likely to say they would reach out to citizens for their thoughts and ideas** after completing the project.
- Ambassadors reported feeling **more connected to Charlotte citizens** after completing the project.
- Ambassadors reported that their communication skills had improved, and also **felt that the project reinforced and refocused their work.**
- **75% of Ambassadors** thought the project should continue in some form.

## Challenges & Recommendations

Major challenges Ambassadors cited were project duration, the process of initiating conversations, low management support, the loss of motivation, and the need to recruit the right team. Recommendations provided by Ambassadors in the post-survey are included for each major challenge.

Challenges	Recommendations
<p><b>Project Duration</b> Some Ambassadors lost the motivation of the initial excitement and came to see the project as a chore. Others found it too steep of a challenge to catch back up after missing some conversations.</p> <p><i>“My enthusiasm for participating definitely decreased as the challenge went on. Maybe 9 months is too long. How about a 3 month challenge with a goal of 10 conversations? That seems a lot more manageable.”</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider shortening the duration of the timeframe for engaging in conversations.</li> <li>• Consider reducing the individual Ambassador goal of 36 conversations.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Initiating Conversations</b> Initiating conversations was difficult for many Ambassadors.</p> <p><i>“It often felt unnatural to strike-up random conversations. Setting up a booth or table at city events, made the connection to Take 10 more natural and conversations doable. “</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider encouraging Ambassadors to go as a group to locations where they can engage in one-on-one conversations. Some Ambassadors felt this approach helped them feel more confident and accountable.</li> <li>• Consider organizing “formal” opportunities for Ambassadors to be part of larger community events.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Management Support</b> Some managers were not supportive of Ambassadors using work time, forcing Ambassadors to complete this project on their personal time.</p> <p><i>“I think a champion higher up in the organization would help. One champion on the 15th floor and more Ambassador support/recognition from Department heads.”</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider securing an influential project “champion” in the City Manager’s Office to provide institutional support.</li> <li>• Consider making the project a work requirement for Ambassadors to guarantee institutional support.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Motivation</b></p> <p>In the post-survey and focus group, Team Leaders described finding team motivation to be a challenge, and most felt that they were not able to overcome the challenges they encountered.</p> <p><i>“Prizes are great! And maybe knowing the end result (like the awesome Tshirt) in the beginning to keep folks enticed.”</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider forming teams of Ambassadors who know each other and have regular contact (e.g., in the same Department).</li> <li>• Consider providing opportunities for team leaders to share best practices for motivating their Ambassadors.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Recruitment</b></p> <p>Ambassadors, Team Leaders, and the Leadership Team thought effort should be made to recruit Ambassadors who would be most likely to succeed with the project.</p> <p><i>“Careful choice of ambassadors and making sure you select ambassadors who can talk to people. You cannot teach these skills in a few sessions so they need to already have them.”</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• While knowing in advance who would make a good Ambassador may be very difficult, consider hosting information sessions to allow potential participants to fully understand and consider the requirements and commitment before become an Ambassador.</li> </ul>

# Introduction

The Take Ten Initiative (Take10CLT) sought to increase public engagement with city government by having 150 city employees hold a ten-minute conversation with a person who lives or works in Charlotte every week for 36 weeks. The project emerged in response to the 2015 Knight Cities Challenge which called for ideas to spur connection and civic involvement, help cities attract and keep talented people, and/or expand economic prospects by breaking down barriers and making new connections. Out of 7,000 ideas that were submitted, the Take10CLT project was one of 32 winners selected from across the country.

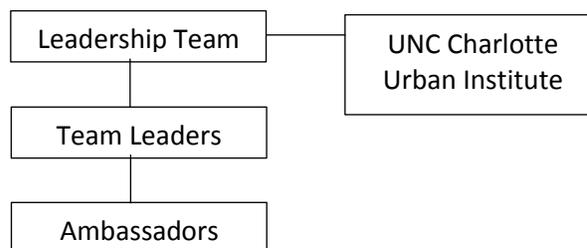
Although the overall goal for conversations was not reached, city employees (called Take10CLT Ambassadors) spoke with almost 2,500 individuals over the course of the nine-month project period.<sup>1</sup> During conversations, Ambassadors asked three main guiding questions:

- 1) What do you like about living here?;
- 2) Can you tell me about your ideas to improve Charlotte today?; and
- 3) Thinking ahead, tell me what do you want Charlotte to be like in five years?

This evaluation report presents data related to the experiences of Take10CLT participants, including the Ambassadors, Team Leaders (who organized and supported groups of Ambassadors), the Take10CLT Leadership Team, and the citizens who were interviewed. Data are derived from multiple surveys, interviews, and focus groups. The primary goals of this evaluation are to

- assess what participants, both citizens and city employees, gained from the project, and
- determine what worked and did not work concerning the project's implementation.

Take10CLT's organizational structure is shown below.



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<sup>1</sup> Ambassadors were asked to engage with people who live or work in the city that they did not know. Therefore, this number does not represent family, friends, City or County workers, but could be an acquaintance.

# Methodology

The Take10CLT evaluation effort began with the creation of the logic model (see page 6) with the input of the Leadership Team. The logic model drove the development of the evaluation tools which consisted of pre- and post-surveys of Ambassadors, a focus group protocol, and a citizen survey.

The pre-survey was completed by 136 ambassadors. The survey protocol can be found in Appendix A. From the results, a “Meet the Ambassadors” document was developed and shared among ambassadors (Appendix B). The post-survey followed up on many of the same questions as the pre-survey and was completed by 99 ambassadors. The post survey tool can be found in Appendix C. Seventy-nine of those who completed the pre-survey also completed the post-survey.

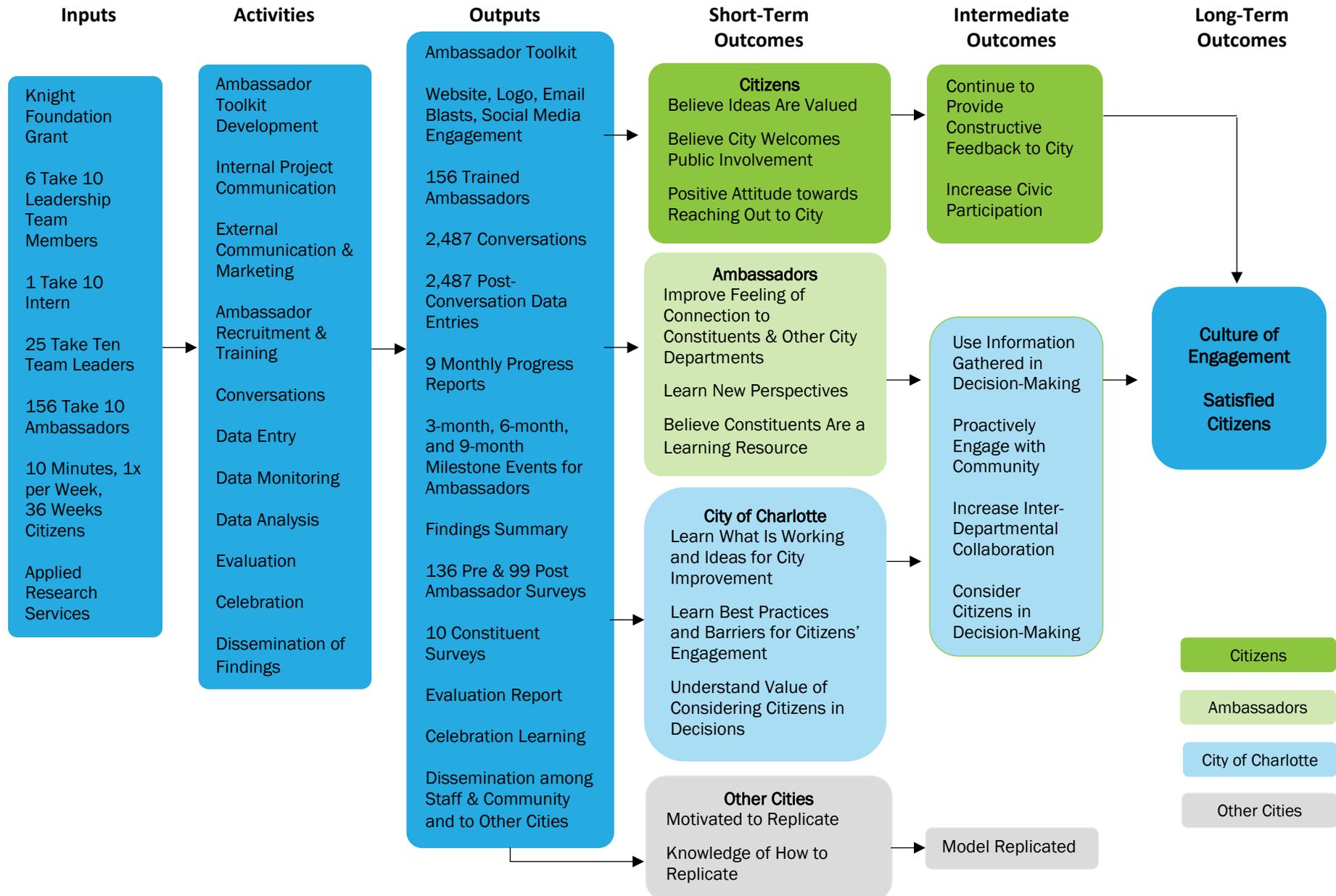
In addition to the surveys, six focus groups were held at the completion of the project. The following was the breakdown of the focus groups:

- three with Ambassadors who completed most, if not all, of their conversations (18 participants)
- one with Ambassadors who fell significantly short of the goal (8 participants)
- one with Team Leaders (10 participants) and
- one with the Leadership Team (6 participants).

The focus group protocols can be found in Appendices D, E, and F. The Take10CLT intern participated in the first portion of the focus group then left with a researcher for a separate interview about the intern experience. The intern interview protocol can be found in Appendix G.

At the end of each Take10CLT conversation, Ambassadors had a thank-you gift and a postcard to give to the citizen participant. The postcard had the URL for a link to the citizen survey. Ten citizens completed the survey, which can be found in Appendix H.

# Logic Model



# Analysis

## Project Goals

The primary goal of Take10CLT was to have each Ambassador complete one conversation with a person who lives or works in Charlotte every week for 36 weeks. Initially, 154 Ambassadors signed up for the project, setting the goal at 5,544 conversations. However, through the course of the project, at least eight Ambassadors left the project (i.e. extended leave, left position with the City, left for personal reasons), realistically lowering the goal by a small degree. A few Ambassadors were also added throughout the project, resulting in 156 participating Ambassadors.

In total, 2,487 conversations were recorded, approximately 45% of the goal. Forty-two Ambassadors completed the target of at least 36 conversations, and 24 completed more than 36 conversations. Although the average number of conversations completed was 16, the median was only 9, meaning that half of the Ambassadors completed less than one conversation per month rather than one per week. A majority (66%) of Ambassadors completed less than half of the target goal. The number of completed conversations ranged from zero (there were 12 Ambassadors with no recorded conversations) to 51 (Figure 1).

Most Ambassadors completed less than half of the target number of 36 conversations

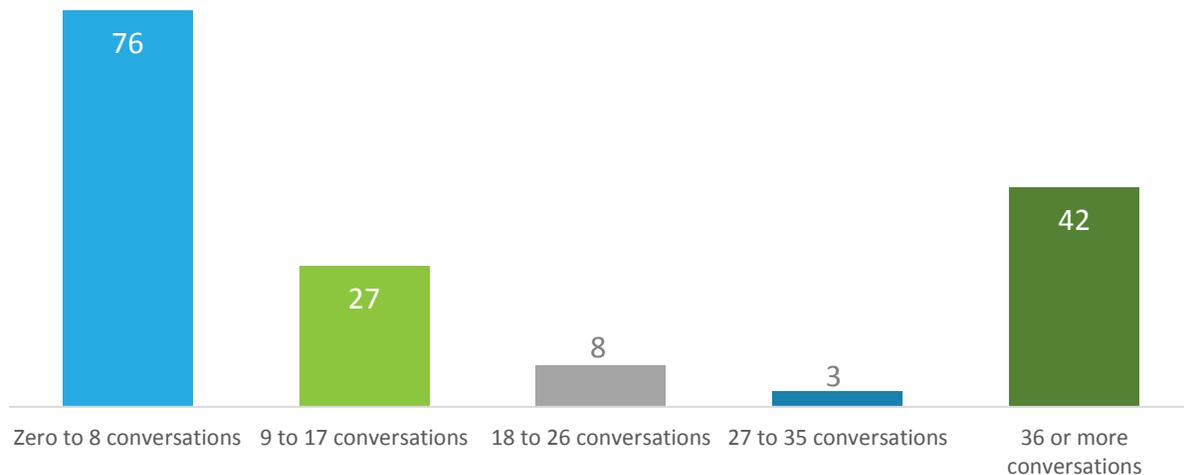


FIGURE 1. TOTAL NUMBER OF AMBASSADORS GROUPED BY NUMBER OF CONVERSATIONS COMPLETED

## Ambassador Experience

Take10CLT Ambassadors indicated a high degree of satisfaction with their experience in the project (Figure 2). On the Ambassador post-survey (Appendix C), 64% of respondents indicated that they were either satisfied or very satisfied with the experience, while just 11% reported being dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. Moreover, an overwhelming majority of Ambassadors (78%) reported they were satisfied or very satisfied with the quality of their Take10CLT conversations. In focus groups, Ambassadors reported especially enjoying getting to meet new people, hearing new and diverse ideas, and receiving positive feedback about the city.

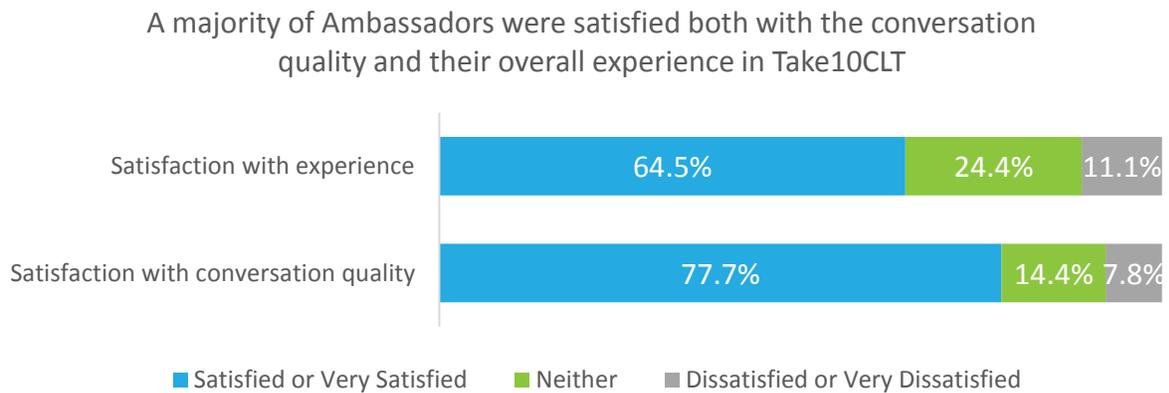
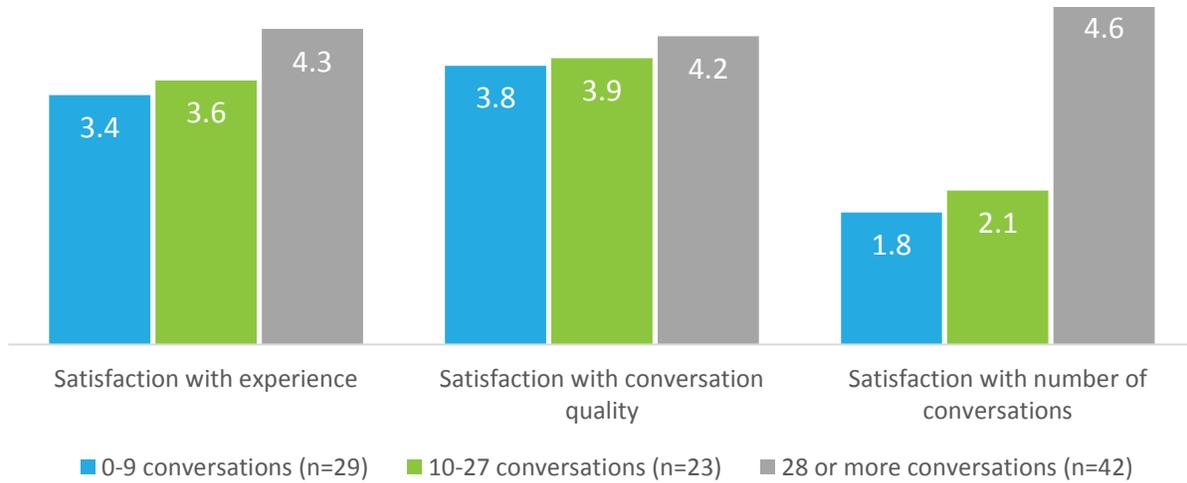


FIGURE 2. AMBASSADOR SATISFACTION RATINGS (N=90)

Some significant differences emerged in satisfaction ratings between those who completed more or fewer conversations (Figure 3). First, Ambassadors who completed more than 75% of the total target conversations (28 or more) averaged a 4.3 out of 5 for satisfaction with their overall Take10CLT experience, while those with 25% or less of the target (9 or fewer) averaged a 3.4.

Second, how satisfied participants were with the quantity of conversations they had completed was related to the actual number of conversations they completed. While those with nine or fewer conversations averaged a 1.8 rating for satisfaction with the number of conversations they completed, those who completed 28 or more conversations gave this a 4.6 rating. On the other hand, satisfaction with the *quality* of conversations did not vary significantly between these groups. Those at the lowest end rated their satisfaction with the quality at a 3.8, while those at the higher end rated it at a 4.2.

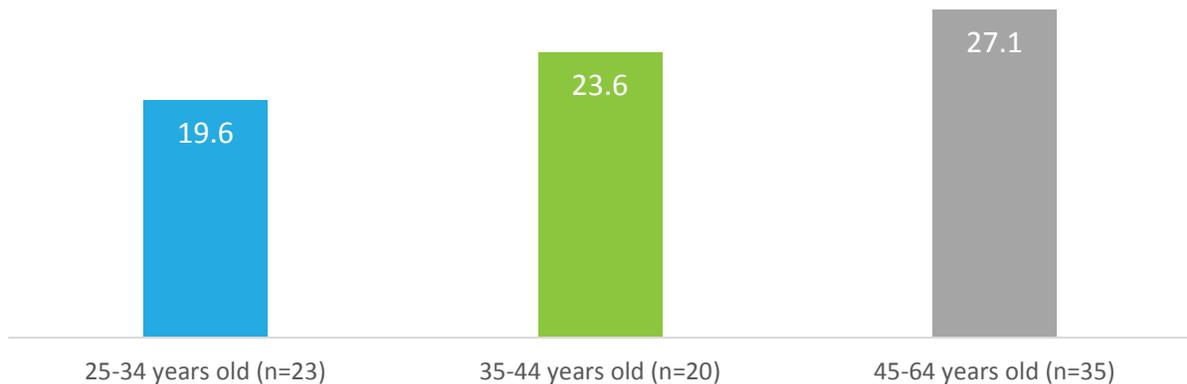
Ambassadors who completed more conversations tended to indicate higher ratings of satisfaction with their Take10CLT experience



**FIGURE 3. AMBASSADOR SATISFACTION RATINGS BY NUMBER OF CONVERSATIONS COMPLETED**

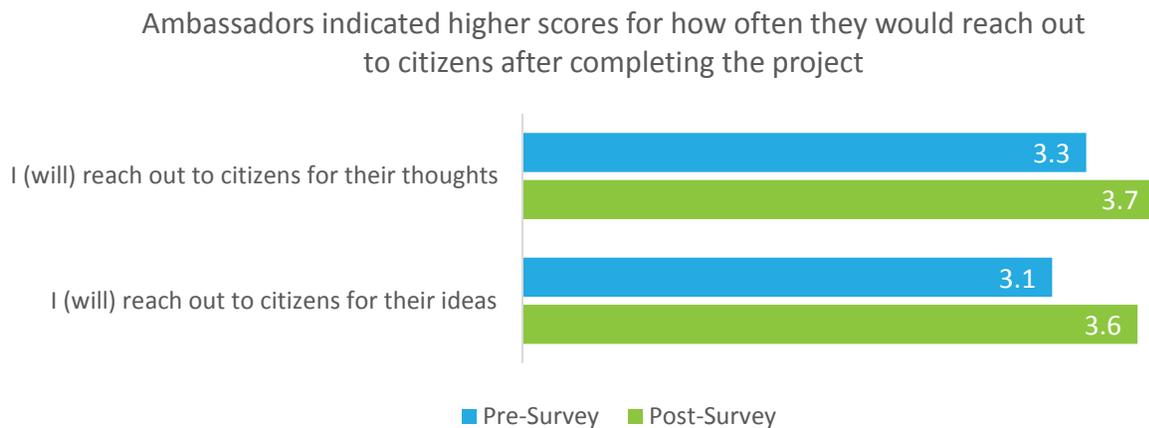
Age of the Take10CLT Ambassadors was the only demographic that played a role in determining who completed more conversations. As Figure 4 shows, there was a significant difference between the number of conversations completed by those who were younger (25-34) and those who were older (45-64), with those who were older completing more conversations. This may reflect different levels of comfort with approaching people informally, a theme which will be explored further later on in this section.

Ambassadors who were older tended to complete more conversations



**FIGURE 4. AVERAGE NUMBER OF CONVERSATIONS COMPLETED BY AGE**

Comparing the Ambassador pre-survey and post-survey also yields some interesting insights (Figure 5). Importantly, none of the pre-survey answers accurately predicted who would complete more conversations, indicating that it may be difficult to predict who would be a good fit for the project prior to it actually starting. However, at post-survey, Ambassadors indicated a significantly higher score for how often they would reach out to citizens for their thoughts and for their ideas than at pre-survey. Moreover, although scores on the pre-survey indicated that Ambassadors felt a fairly strong connection to Charlotte constituents prior to Take10CLT (3.7 out of 5), nearly 60% of the 74 Ambassadors with responses on both the pre- and post-surveys indicated that they felt *more* connected to Charlotte constituents following their participation in the project.



**FIGURE 5. COMPARISON OF AMBASSADOR PRE- AND POST-SURVEY RATINGS FOR REACHING OUT TO CITIZENS (N=74)<sup>2</sup>**

Although there were many positive outcomes resulting from participation in the project, most Ambassadors did not complete the target number of conversations; therefore, it is necessary to look also at the challenges encountered by Ambassadors and the strategies they used to overcome them.

As Figure 6 shows, on the post-survey, nearly 65% of participants indicated that the biggest challenge to completing the conversations was simply making the time for them. Another 44% reported that initiating conversations with strangers was a challenge. Roughly 30% of participants also indicated that it was difficult to reach a diverse population, to enter the data, and to get people to participate.

The primary themes from the focus groups were similar, with the most common topics being issues related to time (e.g., increased workloads, completing interviews took longer than expected, interviews had to be completed on Ambassador’s free time or weekends) and discomfort with approaching someone you don’t know.

<sup>2</sup> There was a slight difference in wording between pre- and post-survey, with the addition of “will” in the post-survey statements “I will reach out to citizens for their thoughts” and “I will reach out to citizens for their ideas.”

A majority of Ambassadors indicated that making time for conversations was a major challenge

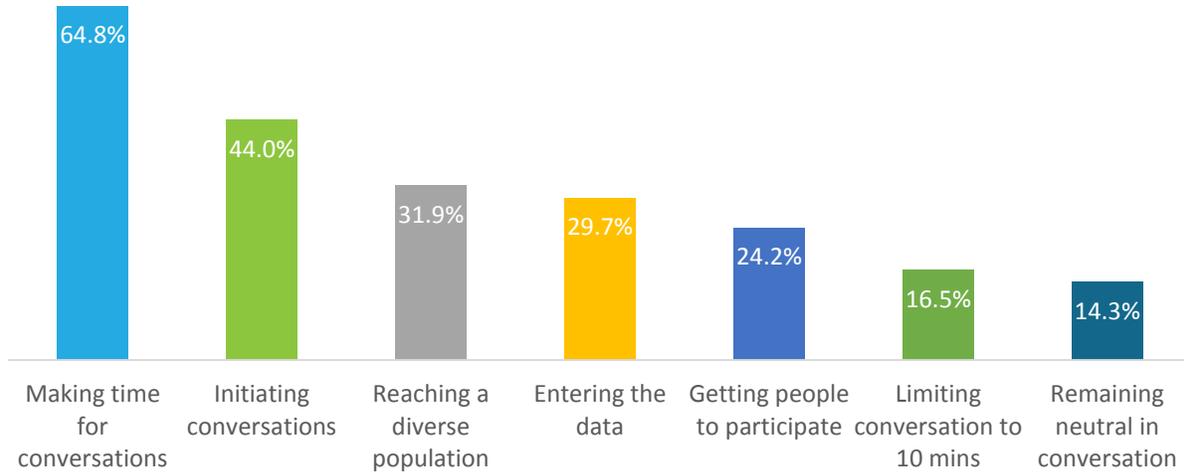


FIGURE 6. TOP FIVE AMBASSADOR CHALLENGES (N=91)

On the post-survey, 50 Ambassadors shared how they were able to overcome the challenges they encountered, identifying sixteen strategies. The most common strategy, indicated by 36% of participants, was that they made sure the project was a high priority and persevered through its completion. Although sixteen strategies were listed by the participants (see Supplemental Evaluation Appendix for a complete list), it is interesting to note that the second most common response was that they felt there were not able to overcome some of their challenges (16%).

The other strategies that were common to both the post-survey and the focus groups were related to going to specific locations (e.g., places with large, “captive” audiences or places where the Ambassador was already comfortable, such as churches or doctors’ offices), making use of formal venues, public meetings, or community events (such as Open Streets 704) to combat the discomfort of approaching people unprompted, and completing multiple interviews at a time rather than one per week. Table 1 provides examples of each of the most common strategies.

**TABLE 1. MOST COMMON WAYS AMBASSADORS OVERCAME CHALLENGES, AMBASSADOR POST-SURVEY (N=50)**

Theme	%	Example
Prioritized the project/persevered	36%	“I just had to block out the time and then I just kept initiating conversations to be able to get enough people to talk to me.”
Went to places with “captive” audiences or places the Ambassador was comfortable	14%	“I asked people in the store when waiting in lines. Asked people I met at church functions.”
Utilized formal or public settings to complete conversations	10%	“The best way I got the most conversations was setting up a pop-up Take10 table at 7 <sup>th</sup> street public market.”
Got better with time or practice	10%	“With time and practice it wasn’t as hard as it was when we began.”
Completed conversations with others	8%	“When I went with others, I easily overcame the challenges. Being with others made me feel more accountable to the project.”
Completed many at once	8%	“I sometimes got on a roll and spoke with a couple of people at one location. That took the pressure off that if things got busy with my work load over the next few weeks I would still have 4 conversations a month.”
Approached people in a certain manner	8%	“I chose to come at people upfront stating I wasn’t selling anything and didn’t even need to know their name, just a few minutes of their time.”

Despite the challenges, a strong majority of post-survey participants (75%) indicated that they believed Take10CLT, or something like it, should continue in the future. This did not vary based on the number of conversations an Ambassador completed; that is, those who completed few conversations and those who completed many equally thought that the project should be replicated.

Although most participants believed Take10CLT should continue, there were a number of suggestions provided throughout both the survey and focus groups for how to improve it (see Figures 7 and 8). The most common suggestion was that the project was too long and/or required too many conversations. In focus groups, participants mentioned that the project became less enjoyable over time and became overwhelming if they missed conversations due to sickness, vacation, an increased workload, or other reasons.

On the post-survey, when asked to describe the number one piece of advice they would give another city replicating Take10CLT, more than 30% of Ambassadors wrote about shortening the time frame or requiring fewer conversations. In another question, 29% of respondents indicated that the biggest support in helping Ambassadors reach their conversation goal in the future would also be to shorten the time frame or reduce the number of conversations required. Some

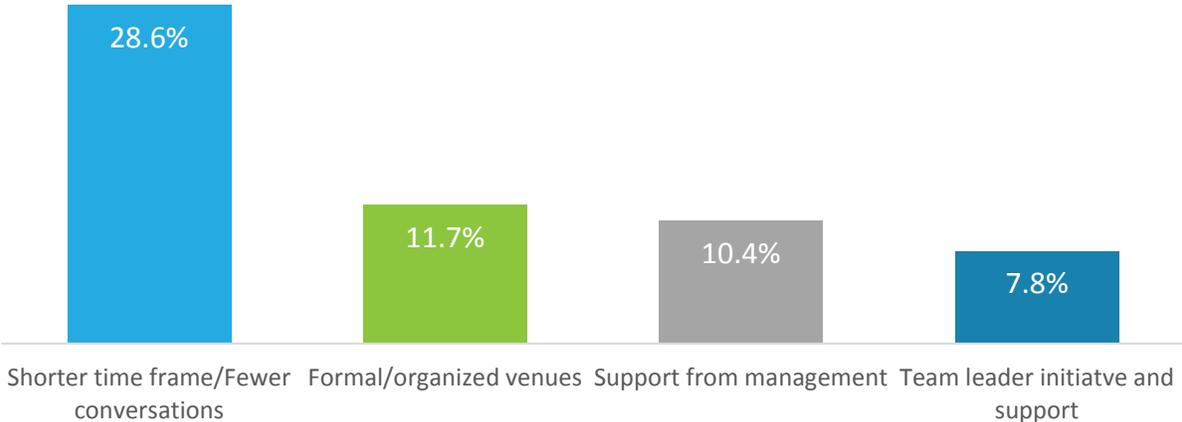
specific suggestions included making the project limited to one, three, or six months, keeping the overall project nine months long but having individual Ambassadors complete conversations for only a certain number of months (i.e., in waves), and having Ambassadors complete multiple conversations per week but for only one month.

A few other suggestions are also worth noting. For one, many Ambassadors reported that they felt approaching strangers at random to be a difficult task. The second most common post-survey response for ways to support Ambassadors was to provide structured settings where they could identify as city employees instead of having the entire project be based on “cold calling” strangers, and this theme also emerged in the focus groups.

Several Ambassadors also reported that it was difficult to consistently have their materials on them, which made it difficult to complete spontaneous conversations; providing more structured conversation opportunities might also help with this issue. Another related suggestion was to change the second and third questions (ideas to improve Charlotte and what Charlotte would ideally look like in five years), as Ambassadors in both the focus groups and on the post-survey found these to be so similar that they felt embarrassed to ask the third question, which often yielded identical answers.

Another important theme was that support from Team Leaders and work managers was essential in completing conversations. Work manager support provided the needed time, while Team Leader support provided the motivation.

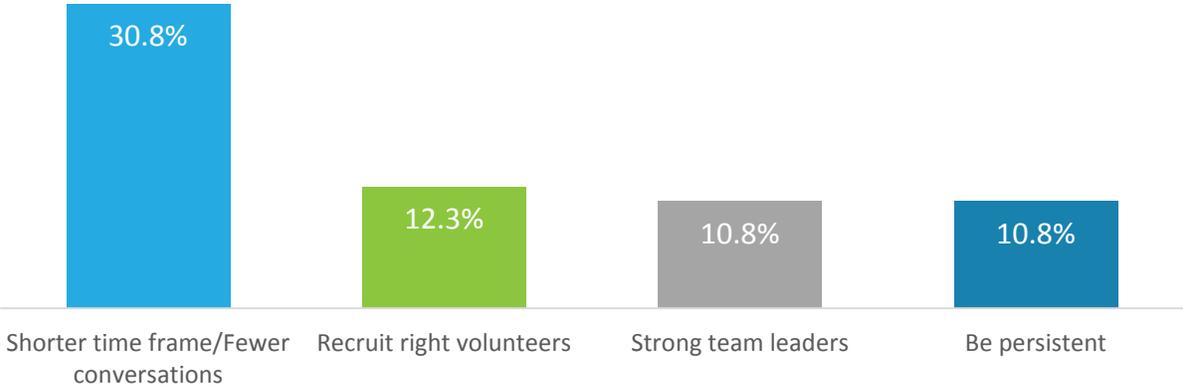
Participants most commonly reported that a shorter time frame/fewer conversations would support their ability to reach conversation goals



**FIGURE 7. RESPONSE THEMES FOR THE QUESTION: WHAT SUPPORT WOULD HELP MORE AMBASSADORS REACH THE CONVERSATION GOAL? (N=77)**

In addition, a number of Ambassadors suggested that recruiting the right kind of volunteers would be helpful for cities trying to replicate the project, that is to say, choosing Ambassadors who are excited about the project and have the people skills necessary to be comfortable doing it. This occurred both in post-survey responses as well as in focus groups. However, it should be noted that none of our pre-survey indicators correlated with the number of conversations an Ambassador eventually completed. Moreover, several Ambassadors reported that the project led them to discover that they were less comfortable approaching strangers than they had believed before the project started. Though recruiting volunteers who are excited about the project may be a good practice, it does not seem that there is clear evidence to determine who would be a good fit for the project prior to its starting. However, focusing on creating teams that know each other and offering regular support to Team Leaders on how to address challenges encountered with their team may be a helpful solution.

Participants most commonly reported that a shorter time frame/fewer conversations would be their number one advice for cities seeking to replicate Take10CLT

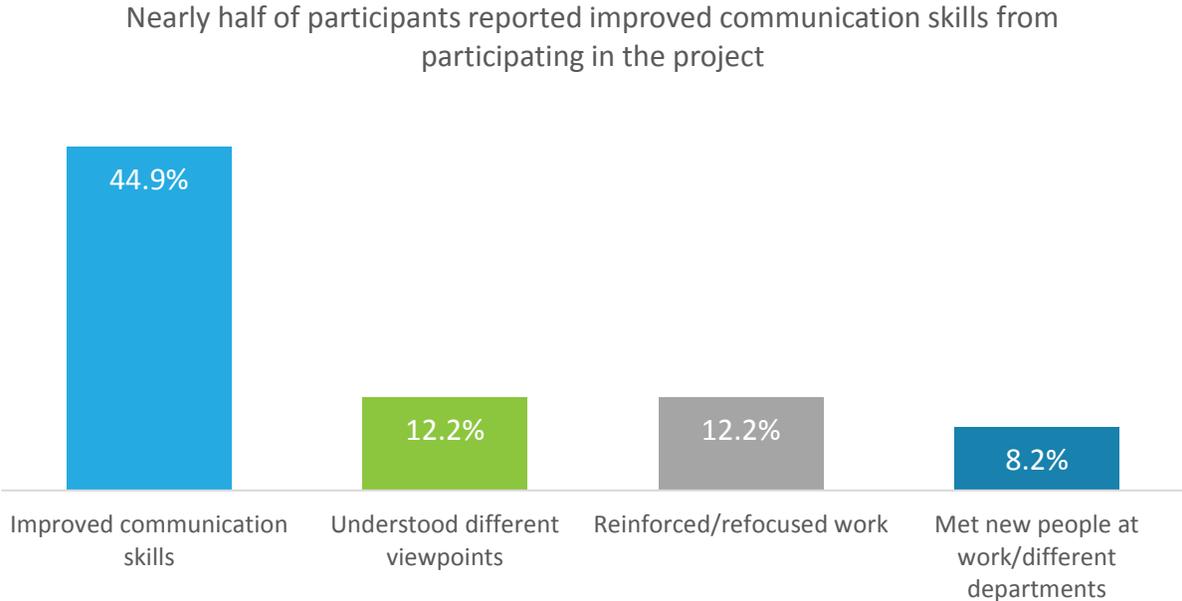


**FIGURE 8. RESPONSE THEMES FOR THE QUESTION: WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE A CITY SEEKING TO REPLICATE TAKE10CLT? (N=65)**

Finally, it should be noted that many Ambassadors found the Take10CLT milestone events to be particularly helpful. Overall, 73 Ambassadors indicated they attended at least one milestone event. Sixty of these Ambassadors answered an open-ended question asking how these events impacted their Take10CLT experience. Nearly half (48%) indicated that these events were inspiring or motivating, and 35% said that it was helpful to exchange information and hear from others. Only 5% said that the events were not significantly impactful.

Overall, the Ambassadors took away a number of valuable lessons from their participation. On the post-survey, 65 Ambassadors offered their insights as to what they learned from the experience that were categorized into 24 different themes (see Supplemental Appendix), with the most common (22%) being the different things that Charlotte citizens are interested in or concerned about, most often transit issues. Other themes that emerged both in focus groups and on the post-survey included learning new perspectives about the city, understanding the importance of reaching out to citizens and making them more aware of the city government’s work and functions, and realizing that people care, have ideas, and want to share their thoughts and opinions.

In terms of personal and professional growth, Figure 9 shows that 22 out of 49 post-survey respondents (45%) indicated that they had improved their ability and comfort with communication skills (including listening, conversation, and people skills), one of thirteen different kinds of professional growth discussed by Ambassadors on the post-survey. Although a handful of participants in both the focus groups and the post-survey indicated they had not gotten much professional growth out of the experience (14% of post-survey respondents), other major themes included gaining new insights and understandings about the city and its citizens and reinforcing and refocusing the Ambassador’s approach to work (e.g., reminding the Ambassador that their work is about improving the city and helping citizens).

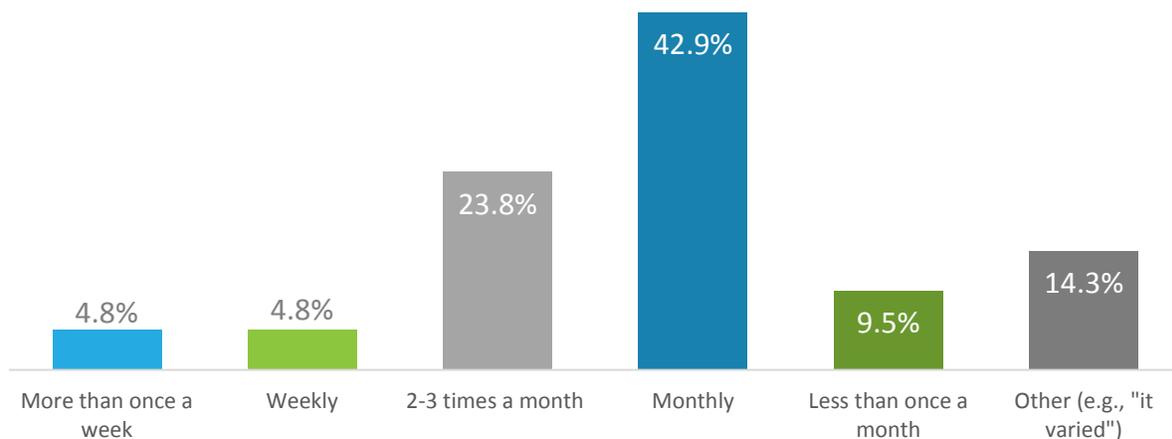


**FIGURE 9. RESPONSE THEMES FOR THE QUESTION: HOW HAVE YOU DEVELOPED PROFESSIONALLY FROM THIS EXPERIENCE? (N=49)**

## Team Leader Experience

Take10CLT Team Leaders held all of the same responsibilities as the Ambassadors but also were in charge of building, supporting, and leading a team of Ambassadors through the project. One of the major tasks, therefore, was communication. As shown in Figure 10, about 71% of Team Leaders reported communicating with their team members between weekly and once a month, with the most common response being “monthly” (43%).

Most Team Leaders interacted with their Ambassadors monthly



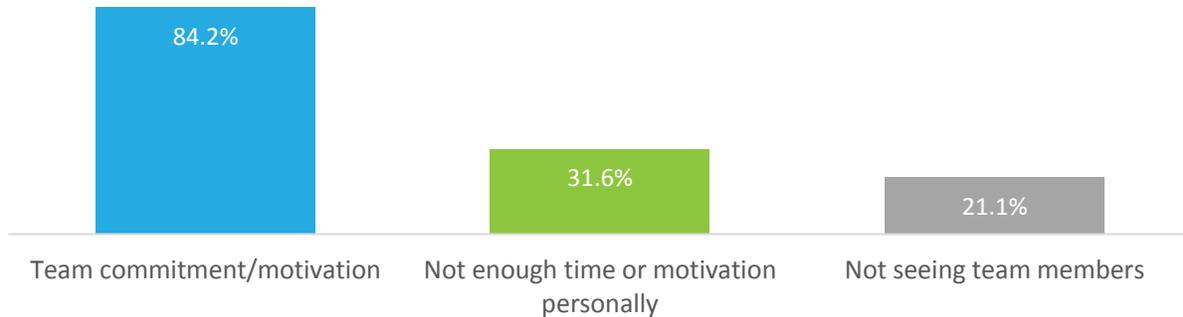
**FIGURE 10. HOW OFTEN TEAM LEADERS COMMUNICATED WITH TEAM MEMBERS (N=21)**

On the whole, Team Leaders were about as satisfied with their Take10CLT experience (3.7 out of 5) as other Ambassadors (3.8 out of 5). Team Leaders enjoyed a number of aspects of their participation as leaders in the project. On the post-survey, the most common responses for what Team Leaders enjoyed about their role were

- working and connecting with new people (26% of Team Leaders)
- contributing towards meeting a larger goal (21%), and
- encouraging and exciting people about the project (21%).

Despite the positive experiences, Team Leaders also faced a number of challenges. Three main challenge areas emerged from post-survey responses, the greatest of which concerned issues related to team member commitment and motivation, which was described by 84% of Team Leaders (see Figure 11).

An overwhelming majority of Team Leaders struggled with being able to motivate and gain commitment from their team members



**FIGURE 11. RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION: WHAT CHALLENGES DID YOU HAVE AS A TEAM LEADER? (N=19)**

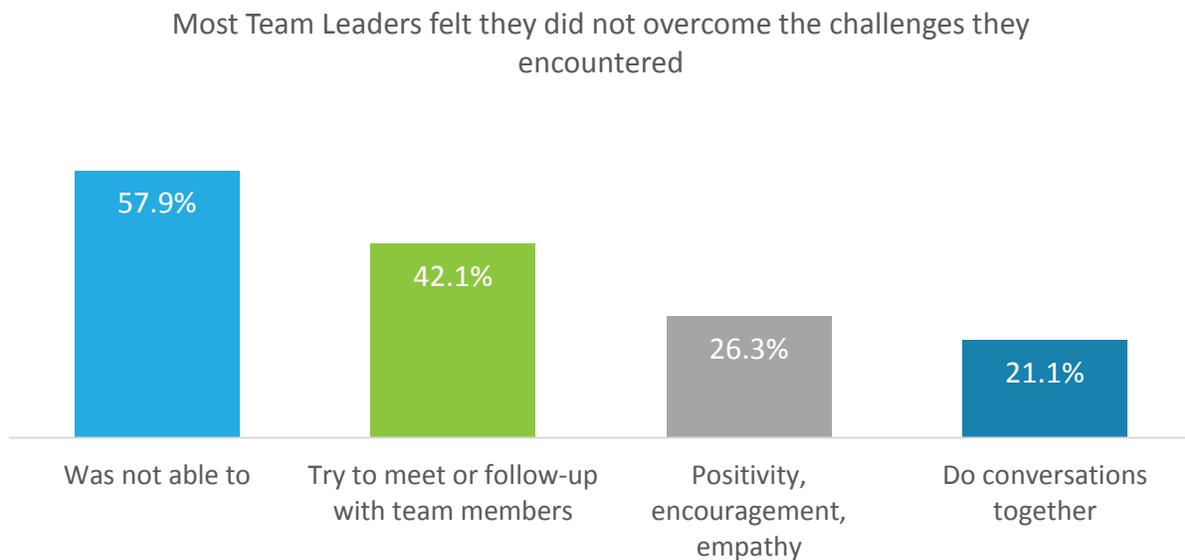
Several Team Leaders also discussed the challenges of finding their own personal motivation for the project (32%) and of not seeing other team members regularly (21%). The Team Leader focus group provided further information related to each of these issues. With no incentives or accountability mechanisms, Team Leaders found it difficult to motivate team members who did not quickly buy in to the project on their own. This problem was further compounded when team members could only be reached by email, as many times Team Leaders felt their messages or invitations to meet up were ignored. Some leaders suggested that a monthly budget for Team Leaders to use as incentives for participation or as a lunch budget to take out team members could have helped with this. Others also felt that a peer-to-peer Team Leader training, where successful Team Leaders shared what was working for them, would have been helpful. In terms of their own motivation, some Team Leaders cited that they had underestimated the time requirements of their role.

Project length and number of conversations again emerged as a major topic for the Team Leaders in focus groups and post-survey open-ended responses. Just as the Ambassadors as a whole, many Team Leaders felt the project went on for too long, affecting their own motivation levels. Timing of the project was also cited as an issue, with the busy holiday season of November and December and the budgeting process of January severely limiting Ambassadors' capacity to complete conversations. Others raised concerns related to the length of commitment required by the project; some felt that they could not back out of the project once it was under way, while others knew of other City employees who would have liked to join after it had started but were not allowed to do so. Still others felt that the restrictions on who could be spoken to limited their ability to reach the conversation goal. Suggestions for changes included allowing Ambassadors to speak with people who live outside of Mecklenburg County, other city employees, and even tourists.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Ambassadors were told the individuals they could engage in Take10CLT conversations must live or work in Charlotte, and must not be City employees, family members, or close friends. The responses received suggest that some Ambassadors misunderstood the restriction, since it did not rule out engaging individuals living outside Mecklenburg County.

A desire for greater support from upper management was also reported by Team Leaders. Some Team Leaders felt that their managers had little understanding of or interest in the project, and reported working on the project only during personal time, feeling guilty about using work time for the project. One suggestion was to ensure that Team Leader responsibilities were considered part of their work assignment and not as something extra. Further, one Team Leader described feeling she was “voluntold” without full understanding of the requirements, which other focus group members agreed with.

Team Leaders reported various ways they tried to overcome their challenges on the post-survey, the most common of which are shown in Figure 12 (a complete list is available in the Supplemental Appendix). The most common method was to try to arrange times to meet or follow-up with their team members (42%). Strategies included consistent emailing, creating online calendar events, and sending invitations to meet up with team members. The other most common responses were to express positivity, encouragement, or empathy to team members (26%) and to complete conversations with team members at a common location (21%). However, a majority of Team Leaders (58%) felt they did not sufficiently overcome their challenges. Most often, Team Leaders reported that if they were to do the project again, the one thing they would do differently would be to choose a better team; specifically, one that the Team Leader would see regularly and that had the necessary levels of comfort and commitment to complete the project. Although knowing in advance who would be most likely to complete conversations may be difficult, creating cohesive team units would likely help with team communication and Team Leaders’ ability to motivate.



**FIGURE 12. RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION: HOW DID YOU OVERCOME YOUR TEAM LEADER CHALLENGES? (N=19)**

## Leadership Team Experience

The Take10CLT Leadership Team was responsible for organizing and managing the project, while also maintaining roles as Team Leaders and Ambassadors. Much of the Leadership Team found this to be too much work for a group of seven employees (including one intern) with existing responsibilities associated with their positions, and much more work than they had anticipated. Specific to the responsibilities of the Leadership Team, they reported that there was a much greater need for more frequent communication than they had expected, and that the majority of work was not restricted to the beginning (e.g., recruiting Ambassadors) but that the workload remained high throughout the project. In addition, the four Leadership Team members who also served in the role of Team Leader experienced many of the same challenges shared by fellow Team Leaders, specifically saying that it was difficult to motivate people, especially those who they saw infrequently. Some members of the Leadership Team suggested that they reduce some of their responsibilities, such as not being Team Leaders or completing a smaller number of conversations; others, seeing these roles as vital to the credibility of the project, suggested that the Leadership Team should be expanded to better diffuse responsibility.

When asked about what could have made this project more successful and what cities trying to replicate the project should do, the Leadership Team gave answers that were similar to those from all Ambassadors and Team Leaders. One major point was the lack of support from managers and the lack of an influential champion from higher up. The Leadership Team suggested that, in order to reach their goal, participation in Take10CLT would have either had to be made a formal part of an employee's work expectations or have had sufficient buy-in from managers to support this as a use of an employee's time. Moreover, the Leadership Team also discussed making an effort to recruit the right people as Team Leaders and Ambassadors to ensure success.

Besides these common insights, the Leadership Team also offered a few perceptions related to higher-level issues. For one, the Leadership Team recognized the need for constant high-quality communication, and suggested the need for a person dedicated to communication who was not also leading the project (and serving as a Team Leader). Another insight was that this "softer side" work, that is, work related to intangible growth and learning rather than pure tangible outputs, was a new concept. With time, they suggested the concept might become more accepted, and this would make the project more successful. Finally, although the project failed to meet its goal, the Leadership Team was content to have set a challenging goal that was not reached than to have set a goal that would have been too easily reached.

The Leadership Team acknowledged many benefits arising from the project. One was directly related to the goal of the project, that being that the perspectives of many people were heard and provided useful information to the city. Another was that the effort was a citywide, cross-departmental effort. The Leadership Team noticed that the project was successful in pulling together people from all across the organization and building inter-departmental relationships.

## Intern Experience

The Take10CLT Intern was hired to provide support to the Leadership Team and handle communication with the Ambassadors. The Intern described a number of skills he gained from his position, including networking skills and an increased network, organization skills, and an understanding of how city governments and departments actually function. He suggested that future interns possess strong writing and oral communication skills, skill with Microsoft Excel and handling and presenting data, and familiarity with how to use social media tools and websites (a sentiment with which the Leadership Team agreed). In addition, the Intern shared the need to be flexible and adaptable to handle various unanticipated challenges that would arise, and suggested that someone with more experience in the professional environment and/or education in communication might be better suited to the needs of this position.

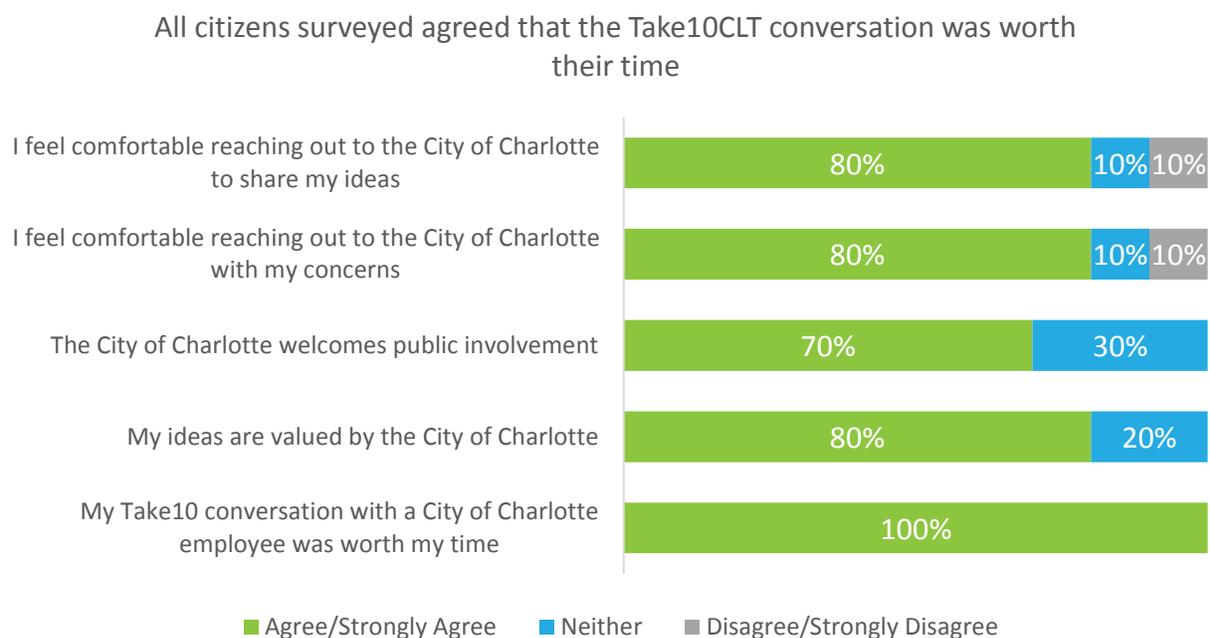
When asked about suggestions for future iterations of Take10CLT, the Intern repeated themes seen elsewhere. He suggested making the time frame shorter so people do not lose interest, making sure that teams were comprised of people who knew each other, and continually finding ways to re-motivate people throughout the project. In all, the Intern described his experience positively and felt that citizens truly appreciated being given the chance to be heard.

## Citizen Experience

Take10CLT citizen participants were provided the opportunity to take a survey as a follow-up to their experience in the project. In all, ten participants took this survey, which included five items rated on a scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree and up to three open-ended responses. Overall, responses were generally positive (see Figure 13). Between 70% and 80% of participants reported they agreed or strongly agreed with the following four statements:

1. My ideas are valued by the City of Charlotte
2. The City of Charlotte welcomes public involvement
3. I feel comfortable reaching out to the City of Charlotte with my concerns
4. I feel comfortable reaching out to the City of Charlotte to share my ideas

On the fifth statement, 100% of participants indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed that “My Take10 conversation with a City of Charlotte employee was worth my time.” However, it should be noted that, as only ten surveys were completed out of 2,487 total conversations held, the survey response rate represents just 0.4% of all citizens interviewed.



**FIGURE 13. CITIZEN SURVEY RESPONSES (N=10)**

Responses in the open-ended section mirrored this favorable sentiment towards the Take10CLT project. When asked how Charlotte could most effectively engage its citizens, 40% of the answers praised Take10CLT and/or suggested that it, or something like it, continue in the future. The second highest response to this question was for the city to improve its outreach methods and efforts, which was written 30% of the time and included suggestions to make efforts to meet people in the locations where they naturally are (e.g. parks, shopping centers) and to distribute surveys in public places. Responses to the other open-ended questions were too few to discern any patterns.

# Challenges & Recommendations

Numerous challenges arose throughout the course of the project. Major challenges cited in the evaluation process were project duration, the process of initiating conversations, low management support, the loss of motivation, and the need to recruit the right team. Table 2 summarizes these challenges with recommendations provided by Ambassadors in the post-survey.

TABLE 2. CHALLENGES AND AMBASSADOR RECOMMENDATIONS

Challenges	Recommendations
<p><b>Project Duration</b> Some Ambassadors lost the motivation of the initial excitement and came to see the project as a chore. Others found it too steep of a challenge to catch back up after missing some conversations.</p> <p><i>“My enthusiasm for participating definitely decreased as the challenge went on. Maybe 9 months is too long. How about a 3 month challenge with a goal of 10 conversations? That seems a lot more manageable.”</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider shortening the duration of the timeframe for engaging in conversations.</li> <li>• Consider reducing the individual Ambassador goal of 36 conversations.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Initiating Conversations</b> Initiating conversations was difficult for many Ambassadors.</p> <p><i>“It often felt unnatural to strike-up random conversations. Setting up a booth or table at city events, made the connection to Take 10 more natural and conversations doable. “</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider encouraging Ambassadors to go as a group to locations where they can engage in one-on-one conversations. Some Ambassadors felt this approach helped them feel more confident and accountable.</li> <li>• Consider organizing “formal” opportunities for Ambassadors to be part of larger community events.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Management Support</b> Some managers were not supportive of Ambassadors using work time, forcing Ambassadors to complete this project on their personal time.</p> <p><i>“I think a champion higher up in the organization would help. One champion on the 15th floor and more Ambassador support/recognition from Department heads.”</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider securing an influential project “champion” in the City Manager’s Office to provide institutional support.</li> <li>• Consider making the project a work requirement for Ambassadors to guarantee institutional support.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Motivation</b> In the post-survey and focus group, Team Leaders described finding team motivation to be a challenge, and most felt that they were not able to overcome the challenges they encountered.</p> <p><i>“Prizes are great! And maybe knowing the end result (like the awesome Tshirt) in the beginning to keep folks enticed.”</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider forming teams of Ambassadors who know each other and have regular contact (e.g., in the same Department).</li> <li>• Consider providing opportunities for team leaders to share best practices for motivating their Ambassadors.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Recruitment</b> Ambassadors, Team Leaders, and the Leadership Team thought effort should be made to recruit Ambassadors who would be most likely to succeed with the project.</p> <p><i>“Careful choice of ambassadors and making sure you select ambassadors who can talk to people. You cannot teach these skills in a few sessions so they need to already have them.”</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• While knowing in advance who would make a good Ambassador may be very difficult, consider hosting information sessions to allow potential participants to fully understand and consider the requirements and commitment before become an Ambassador.</li> </ul>

# Appendices

## Appendix A: Ambassadors Pre-Survey

1. Take 10 Ambassador ID # \_\_\_\_\_
2. Department: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Are you a team leader?    Yes    No
4. Race/Ethnicity:    African American    Asian    Hispanic    Multi-Racial    White  
Other
5. Gender:    Female    Male
6. Age Range:    18-24    25-34    35-44    45-64    65+
7. How long have you worked for the city (years and/or months)? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Describe your role with the City (please note if you serve in a supervisor role, directly work with constituents, are support staff, etc.).
9. Why did you sign up to be an ambassador?

10. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I feel connected to Charlotte constituents					
I feel connected to other city departments					
My job decisions directly impact Charlotte constituents					
I am comfortable talking to new people					

11. When making decisions in your job, how often do you...

	Never	Almost Never	Sometimes	Often	Very Often
Consider constituents <u>needs</u>					
Consider constituents <u>wants</u>					
Reach out to constituents for <u>new ideas</u>					
Reach out to constituents for <u>their thoughts</u>					

These next questions will help the leadership team, city, and Knight Foundation understand the Take 10 experience for city employees in relation to the expectations at onset. Your answers will also provide us with important details to share with cities interested in replicating. Please take your time answering them.

12. What, if anything, do you anticipate enjoying the most about engaging in Take 10 conversations?
  
13. What, if anything, do you think will be your biggest challenge in engaging in Take 10 conversations?
  
14. What, if anything, do you hope to learn from this experience?
  
15. How, if at all, do you hope Take 10 will help you develop professionally?



# Meet the Ambassadors

From October 2015 through June 2016, 154 City employees will be holding **36 ten-minute conversations** with citizens who live or work in Charlotte. The Take10 Ambassadors will collectively engage in **over 5,000** conversations. This report provides general information about the Ambassadors and captures expectations for participation and learning.

## Where we work in City government

- |                           |                        |                      |
|---------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| Aviation                  | CharMeck 311           | Human Resources      |
| CATS                      | City Attorney's Office | I&T                  |
| CC&M                      | City Manager's Office  | M&FS                 |
| CDOT                      | City Clerk's Office    | NBS                  |
| Charlotte Fire Department | CMPD                   | Planning             |
| Charlotte Water           | E&PM                   | Solid Waste Services |

## Our demographic make-up

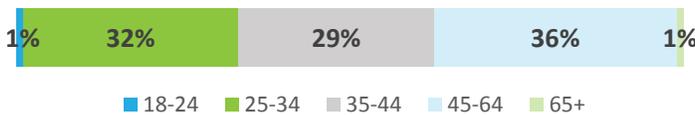
### Race/Ethnicity

(n=136)



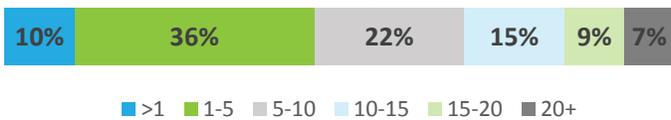
### Age

(n=136)



### Years of City Service

(n=134)



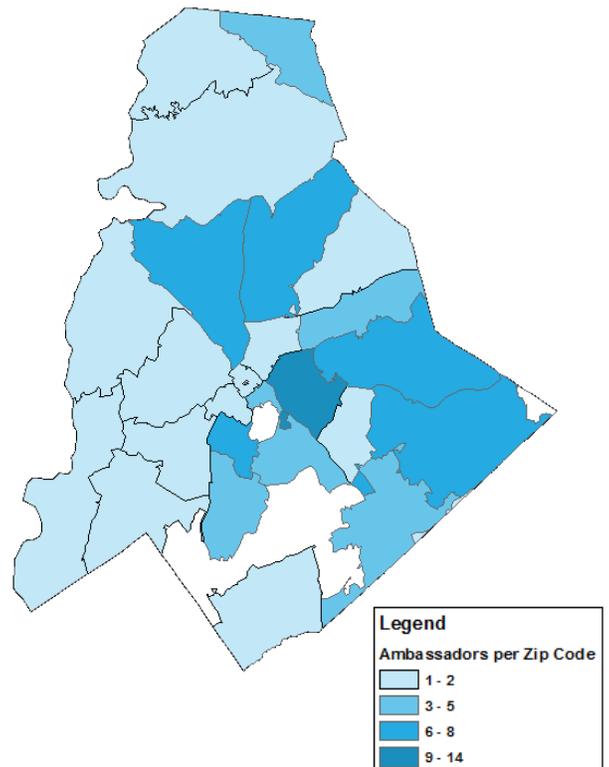
### Gender

(n=134)



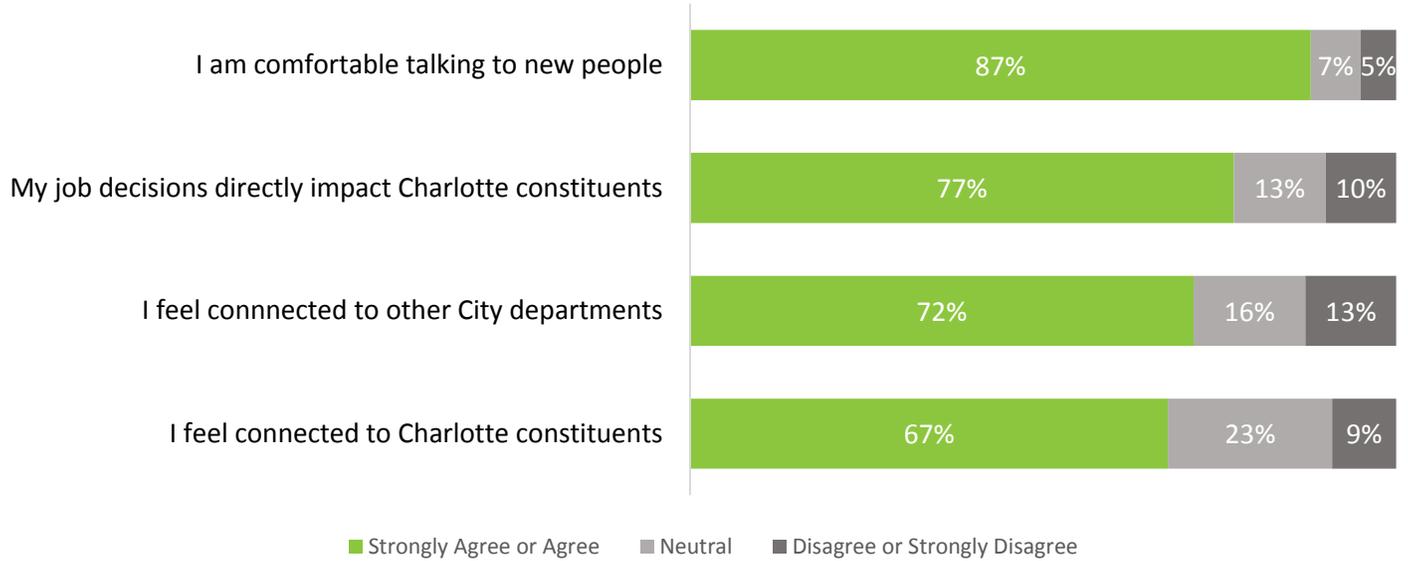
### Residences by Zip Code

(n=118; 89 in Meck., 29 outside)

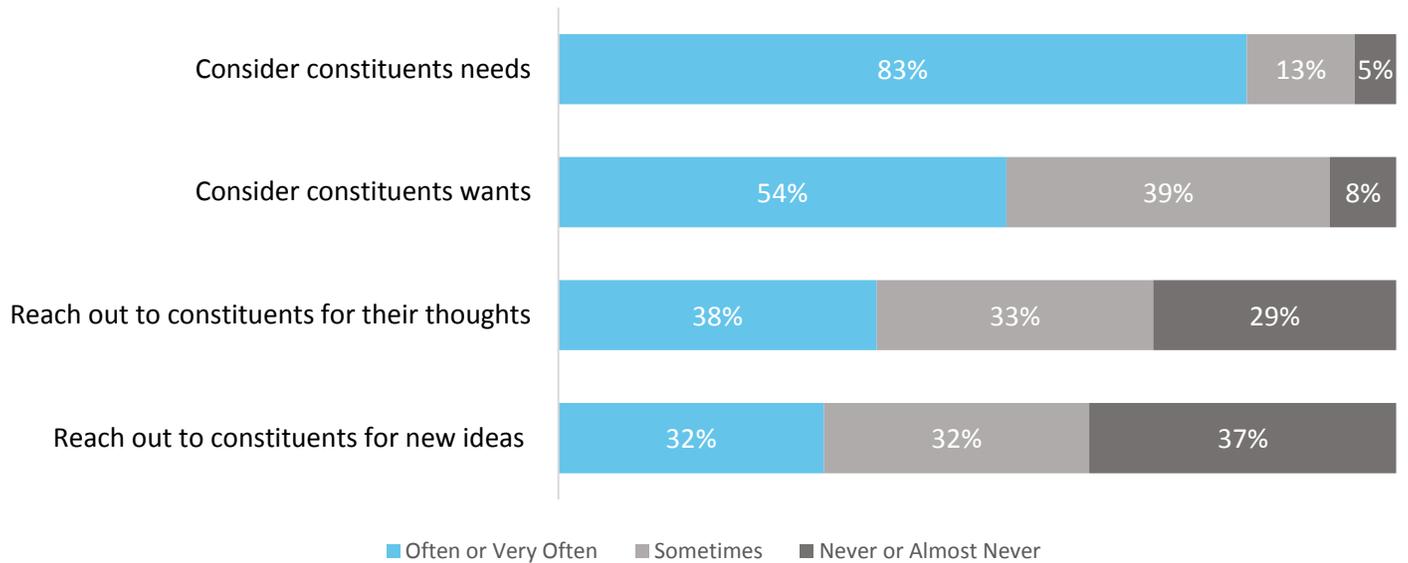


# As a group...

## We overwhelmingly agreed that we are comfortable talking to new people



## We often consider constituent needs when decision-making



## We also shared...

*Green numbers denote how many ambassadors said something along theme. Quote is one example of response in each theme.*

### Why we signed up

**(37)** We were asked: “I was asked and we have a strong team.”

**(32)** It would be fun/interesting: “It sounded like a really interesting idea and a great opportunity to learn from citizens about how to improve the city.”

**(28)** To meet people or engage with the community: “Because I like making our city better and take that responsibility seriously. I also enjoy engaging with people I don’t know yet.”

### What we anticipate enjoying the most

**(74)** Getting to hear diverse ideas: “Getting to know the viewpoints of different people around the city.”

**(56)** Meeting new people: “Meeting new people, 36 new diverse individuals and hearing their wants and outlook for Charlotte.”

### What we think will be largest challenge

**(40)** Getting people to participate: “Finding a stranger to give me 10 min. of their day.”

**(25)** Time: “Finding time to get out into the community and be in a place that someone has the time for a conversation.”

**(24)** Initiating the conversations: “Initiating conversations in public with strangers, one at a time.”

**(8)** Limiting conversation to only 10 minutes: “Trying to keep the people that are really passionate about an issue under 10 minutes!”

**(8)** Reaching a diverse population: “Engaging with a diverse citizen base.”

**(5)** Remembering to conduct conversations: “Remembering to actually do it!”

## What we hope to learn

- (30)** How to make Charlotte better: “What we can do to make our city better and to make our constituents feel heard!”
- (21)** How constituents feel about Charlotte: “That others share the same feelings and love Charlotte just as much as I do.”
- (7)** How to engage with the community: “I hope to learn how to engage public opinion better. I plan to use feedback to improve my job skills.”
- (7)** Viewpoints on City government: “How we can improve perceptions as a municipality.”
- (5)** More about the community: “I want to learn more about the whole community, not just the part I know.”
- (4)** How to talk to constituents: “I also hope I can learn how to better engage people I don't know in conversation.”

## How we hope to develop professionally

- (30)** Understanding needs of community: “Develop my awareness regarding community needs/wants/gripes.”
- (11)** Networking: “I hope that this will help expand my professional network and my contacts within the city.”
- (9)** Better public speaking skills: “Practice public speaking and approaching new people, understand issues in the community that could influence my profession.”
- (8)** Better listening & presentation skills: “Build confidence in challenging situations and be comfortable presenting my ideas in a public setting. Improve presentation skills as well as listening skills.”

## Appendix C: Ambassadors Post-Survey

1. Take Ten Ambassador ID # \_\_\_\_\_
2. Were you a Take Ten team leader? Yes No
  - a. If yes:
    1. On average, how often did you communicate with your team members (specifically about Take10)?
    2. What did you enjoy about being a team leader?
    3. What challenges did you have as a team leader?
    4. How did you overcome your team leader challenges?
    5. What, if anything, would you do differently as a team leader?
  - b. If no:
    1. On average, how often did you communicate with your team leader (specifically

3. How satisfied are you with the following:

	Very Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Very Satisfied
Your experience as an ambassador					
The number of conversations you had					
The quality of conversations you had					
The training you received before starting					
The support you had from your Team Leader					
The support you had from the Take Ten Leadership Team					

3a. If you answered you were very or somewhat dissatisfied for any of the above, please elaborate.

4. Over the course of Take10, how often did you...

	Never	Almost Never	Sometimes	Often	Very Often
Start an impromptu conversation when out and about					
Use the logbook					
Provide a thank you gift (sunglasses or notebook)					
Give and explain the postcard					
Read the Monthly Report					

4a. If you answered never or almost never for any of the above, please elaborate.

5. Did you attend the following milestone events?

	Yes	No
3 month milestone event "Take10 Coffee, Conversation, & Continental Breakfast" on January 15		
6 month milestone event "Take10CLT: Coffee, Conversation, Continental Breakfast" on April 12		
9 month milestone event "Take10: Congrats to Us! Ice Cream Celebration" on July 15		

5a. If you attended at least one milestone event, please share how, if at all, the event(s) impacted your Take10 experience.

6. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I feel more connected to Charlotte constituents					
I feel more connected to other city departments					
My job decisions directly impact Charlotte constituents					
I am more comfortable talking to new people					

6a. If you answered you strongly disagree or disagree for any of the above, please elaborate.

7. When decision-making in your job, how often will you...

	Never	Almost Never	Sometimes	Often	Very Often
Consider constituents <u>needs</u>					
Consider constituents <u>wants</u>					
Reach out to constituents for <u>new ideas</u>					
Reach out to constituents for <u>their thoughts</u>					

7a. If you answered you never or almost never for any of the above, please elaborate.

8. On a scale from 1 to 10, 1 being easy and 10 being extremely difficult, how would you rate the difficulty of completing your conversations? \_\_\_\_\_

9. What were the largest challenges you encountered completing your Take 10 conversations? (Choose up to 3)

- a. Initiating conversations
- b. Limiting the conversation to only 10 minutes
- c. Reaching a diverse population
- d. Getting people to participate
- e. Remaining neutral during conversations
- f. Making time for conversations
- g. Entering the data
- h. Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- i. Did not experience any challenges

10. How, if at all, did you overcome the challenges you encountered?

11. Fewer than 30% of Ambassadors hit the goal of 36 face-to-face conversations. If Take10 were implemented again in Charlotte or replicated elsewhere, what support would help more Ambassadors reach the conversation goal?

12. Do you think some iteration of Take10 should be continued by the City of Charlotte?  
12a. Please share any thought on this.

13. What, if anything, did you learn from this experience?

14. How, if at all, have you developed professionally from this experience?

15. If another city were to replicate Take10, what is the **number one** piece of advice you'd give them?

16. Would you be willing to participate in a focus group to further discuss your Take10 experience?

17. Is there anything else you want to share?

## Appendix D: Ambassador Focus Group Protocol

### Introduction:

Hello, thank you for taking the time to join our discussion about the Take10CLT initiative. Many of you know me from training and events, but my name is [Name] and I am a researcher at the UNC Charlotte Urban Institute. I will be facilitating our conversation today.

For about the next hour, we are going to discuss your Take10 experience and what you learned. Before we begin, let me suggest some things to make our discussion as productive as possible. We will not link anything you say to your name so we encourage you to speak openly. We also ask everyone to respect the confidentiality of your colleagues and not repeat anything when you leave the room.

I will be asking questions and encouraging people to speak up, but will not be participating in the conversation so please feel free to respond to each other and to speak directly to others in the group.

We are interested in hearing about everyone's experiences so please participate, but be conscious to not dominate the conversation.

I and my colleague, [Name], are going to take some notes as we speak and this discussion will also be recorded. We will refer to the recording to ensure that all discussion points are captured.

Does anyone have any questions before we get started?

Let's begin with introductions. Can everyone please give your name and department?

## Questions:

First, let's talk about your experience engaging in the Take10 conversations.

Everyone in this group came very close to or met the goal of 36 conversations so I'd like to spend some time focusing on what you all found successful. Let's talk a little bit about the method of getting your conversations.

1. What worked for you in holding your conversations?
  - i. Probe: What learnings did you have to get there? What challenges did you overcome and how?
  
2. What did you find most enjoyable?
  
3. What ideas do you have if the City were to continue a similar initiative?
  - i. Probe: Would you want to continue informally or formally? Should others be invited?

Next, let's talk about what you learned from the conversations.

1. What, if anything, did you learn from a conversation that you think the city can implement?
  
2. How, if at all, did this experience impact how you will approach your job?
  - i. Probe: Do you feel more in touch with the city and other residents? Able to incorporate feedback into your work? Change what you do?
  
3. How, if at all, did this experience impact your personal and professional development?

## Closing:

We have reached the end of our questions for today. I want to thank everyone again for taking the time to come out today and sharing valuable insights about Take10. I can stay here for a bit if anyone has any last thoughts they'd like to share. Otherwise, I hope you have a great day and you are free to go.

## Appendix E: Team Leader Focus Group Protocol

### Introduction:

Hello, thank you for taking the time to join our discussion about the Take10CLT initiative. Many of you know me from training and events, but my name is [Name] and I am a researcher at the UNC Charlotte Urban Institute. I will be facilitating our conversation today. For about the next hour, we are going to discuss your team leader experience.

Before we begin, let me suggest some things to make our discussion as productive as possible. We will not link anything you say to your name so we encourage you to speak openly. We also ask everyone to respect the confidentiality of your colleagues and not repeat anything when you leave the room.

I will be asking questions and encouraging people to speak up, but will not be participating in the conversation so please feel free to respond to each other and to speak directly to others in the group.

We are interested in hearing about everyone's experiences so please participate, but be conscious to not dominate the conversation.

I and my colleague, [Name], are going to take some notes as we speak and this discussion will also be recorded. We will refer to the recording to ensure that all discussion points are captured.

Does anyone have any questions before we get started?

Let's begin with introductions. Can everyone please give your name, department, and how your team was put together (i.e. did you build your team or were you assigned or a combination)?

### Questions:

1. Here are the commitments you agreed to when you started this project. What do you wish you had known at the start of the project about these tasks?
  - ii. Probe: Are there tasks not reflected on this list?
2. What expectations did you have of yourself as a team leader?
  - I. Probe: How did your expectations compare to your experience?
  - II. Follow-up: What expectations should there be of team leaders?

3. What support did the leadership team provide?
  - I. Probes: What additional support could the leadership team have provided? What support could have helped you meet your expectations for yourself?
4. How did you interact with your team?
  - I. Probes: How often? What did you communicate? What, if anything, did you do together? Do you think your efforts were successful in helping your team reach its goal?
5. What ideas do you have for the team leader role if this initiative were to continue or if someone to replicate?
  - I. Follow-up: The basic organization was leadership team, 25 team leaders, and approximately 125 additional ambassadors. What other organizational methods would you recommend, assuming the same basic project structure?
  - II. Follow-up: How would you recommend adjusting the structure? What organizational methods would you recommend for those structures?
6. How, if at all, did your experience as a team leader impact your personal and professional development?
  - iii. Follow-up: How about your experience as an ambassador?
7. Are there any challenges of your team leader experience we haven't touched upon today about which the leadership team should be aware?
8. Is there anything you enjoyed about being a Take10 team leader we haven't touched upon that you'd like to share?
9. Any final thoughts?

### Closing:

We have reached the end of our questions for today. I want to thank everyone again for taking the time to come out today and sharing valuable insights about being a Take10 team leader. I can stay here for a bit if anyone has any last thoughts they'd like to share. Otherwise, I hope you have a great day and you are free to go.

## Appendix F: Leadership Team Focus Group Protocol

### Introduction:

For about the next hour, we are going to discuss your leadership team experience.

Before we begin, let me suggest some things to make our discussion as productive as possible. I will be asking questions and encouraging people to speak up, but will not be participating in the conversation so please feel free to respond to each other and to speak directly to others in the group.

I am going to take some notes as we speak and this discussion will also be recorded. We will refer to the recording to ensure that all discussion points are captured.

Does anyone have any questions before we get started?

### Questions:

*We are going to begin with some questions concerning the leadership team role.*

1. What were your expectations for being on the leadership team?
  - a. Follow-up: How did these expectations compare to your experience?
  - b. Follow-up: What expectations should there be of the leadership team?
2. Leadership team members were also team leaders and ambassadors. How did you balance these roles?
  - a. Probes: What did you prioritize? What would you do differently?
3. From your vantage point, as a member of the leadership team, what could have been done to help more ambassadors reach the 36 conversation mark?
  - a. Probe: Some leadership team members and team leaders did not reach the goal. Should there be the same conversation expectation of team leaders and leadership team members? How could they be motivated?
4. How did you interact with team leaders and ambassadors?
  - a. Probes: How often? What did you communicate? What, if anything, did you do together? Do you think your efforts were successful in helping your team reach its goal?
5. What ideas do you have for the leadership role if this initiative were to continue or if someone to replicate?
  - a. Follow-up: The basic organization was leadership team, 25 team leaders, and approximately 125 additional ambassadors. What other organizational methods would you recommend, assuming the same basic project structure?

- b. Follow-up: How would you recommend adjusting the structure? What organizational methods would you recommend for those structures?

*The next questions concern the role of the intern.*

6. What were your expectations for the intern role?
  - a. Follow-up: How did these expectations compare to the experience?
7. What was the most important contribution of the intern to the project?
8. How could the intern role be most effectively utilized?
9. If Take10 were to be continued or replicated, what skills and experience would you look for in an intern?

*To close, I have a few questions about the impact of Take10.*

10. How do you believe the results of Take10 will benefit the City of Charlotte?
11. How do you believe the process of Take10 will benefit the City of Charlotte?
12. How, if at all, did your Take10 experience impact your personal and professional development?
  - a. Probe: As member of leadership team, team leader, and ambassador
13. Is there anything else you would like to share about your Take10 experience?

## Appendix G: Intern Survey

1. How has your experience as the Take10 intern compared to your expectations when you accepted the position? (Provide job description for reference)
2. What are the 3 most important skills, experiences, or knowledge you gained for your career from your internship experience?
3. What do you think was the most significant contribution you made to the project?
4. What, if anything, do you wish you had done differently that might have made the project more successful?
5. What, if anything, would have made your internship experience more fulfilling and rewarding?  
Probes if necessary: What could you have done? What could the Leadership Team have done?
6. If Take10 were to be repeated, how could the intern position be enhanced so the individual could make the largest contribution possible?  
Probe: What skills and knowledge would you look for in that enhanced intern position?
7. What other ideas do you have to make Take10 more successful if the initiative were to be continued or replicated?
8. What perceptions have you developed regarding the City of Charlotte from your experience with Take10?
9. Is there anything else you would like to share about your experience with Take10?

## Appendix H: Citizen Survey

Thanks for engaging in a Take10CLT conversation!

1. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
My Take10 conversation with a City of Charlotte employee was worth my time					
My ideas are valued by the City of Charlotte					
The City of Charlotte welcomes public involvement					
I feel comfortable reaching out to the City of Charlotte <u>with my concerns</u>					
I feel comfortable reaching out to the City of Charlotte to share <u>my ideas</u>					

2. If you disagreed with any of the statements above, please elaborate:

3. How do you think the City of Charlotte can most effectively engage citizens?

4. Is there anything you didn't share during your Take 10 conversation that you would like to add?

