

Lancaster 2020

Shaping Our Future

November 11, 2008

**Summary Report
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Lancaster County
*Community
Foundation*



United Way
of Lancaster County



THE LANCASTER
CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY

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Collaborating Partner – *AmericaSpeaks*

AmericaSpeaks is a nonpartisan, non-profit organization with a mission of providing Americans a greater voice in the most important decisions that impact their lives. *AmericaSpeaks* has engaged more than 130,000 citizens across the country on topics such as healthcare reform in Maine, shaping municipal budget priorities in Washington D.C., and developing rebuilding plans for the World Trade Center in New York City. Last year, 3,500 Californians in eight simultaneous town meetings told the governor and legislature their priorities for healthcare reform. For more information, visit www.americaspeaks.org.

Table of Contents

I. Executive Summary	2
II. Lancaster’s Recent Accomplishments	4
III. Aspirations for a 21st Century Lancaster County	5
IV. Opportunities for Consideration	6
a. Well-Being of People.....	7
b. Connections & Collaboration	8
c. Economic Engine	9
d. Physical Environment	11

Executive Summary

On Tuesday, November 11, 2008, 300 plus diverse community leaders from Lancaster County came together to define and to discuss the future of the community. Together, participants developed a vision, identified values for a 21st Century Lancaster County, and prioritized opportunities and actions within four topic areas:

1. **Well-Being of People**
2. **Connections & Collaboration**
3. **Economic Engine**
4. **Physical Environment**

Participants discussed 31 specific opportunities for change and recorded their thoughts for future reference. They voted for the opportunities they believed were the most promising and produce information to guide the community's efforts toward change. The top opportunities selected within each topic area included:

Well-Being of People

- Improve financial stability of residents
- Ensure access to quality education

Connections & Collaboration

- Reduce duplication and improve efficiency of public services
- Increase equity and inclusion

Economic Engine

- Attract and grow businesses
- Improve infrastructure and public services

Physical Environment

- Establish innovative land-management zoning practices
- Create safe and affordable neighborhood

Lancaster 2020 Vision Statement

Lancaster values integrity, equality, and freedom. All citizens are appreciated and nurtured. Diversity and change is respected and embraced. Our cultural heritage and traditions are preserved. Inclusion, innovation, and collaboration are the norm.

- All children have access to quality education and have the support needed to make them life-long learners.
- All residents have access to and can afford quality healthcare.
- All residents have access to affordable, safe housing.
- A community-wide public transportation system allows residents of urban, rural, and suburban areas to get to work, school, and to access needed services.
- Our economy is strong and dynamic because we lead in job creation, workforce development and green technology.
- We engage in sound environmental practices.
- Our government is streamlined and services are regionalized.
- Citizens are engaged in the democratic process.

Seventy-nine percent (79%) of participants felt the statement described their vision of Lancaster County in 2020.

Table 1. Cities Ranked & Rated Rankings of 373 US Metropolitan Areas

Metro Area	Rank
Gainesville, FL	1
Bellingham, WA	2
Portland-Vancouver-Beaverton, OR	3
Colorado Springs, CO	4
Ann Arbor, MI	5
Allentown-Bethlehem-Easton, PA	39
State College, PA	49
Pittsburgh, PA	74
Lancaster, PA	96
Harrisburg, PA	107
Reading, PA	118
Philadelphia, PA	153

Source: Sperling and Sander (2007). *Cities Ranked & Rated Second Edition*. Wiley Publishing, NJ.

Lancaster's Recent Accomplishments

When the more than 300 Lancaster 2020 participants were asked, "What is one community accomplishment of which you are most proud?" several themes emerged.

- ***Revitalization of Lancaster City***

Participants identified several examples of the county's efforts to improve not only Lancaster City, but also the county as a whole through its revitalization efforts. Among those highlighted during Lancaster 2020 were the development of the convention center, the downtown hotel, the Clipper Magazine Stadium, the restoration of the Fulton Opera House, increased support for a vibrant arts community through efforts such as First Friday, and the James Street Improvement District.

- ***Collaboration Between Sectors***

Lancaster County has seen increased collaboration in recent years between organizations of the same sector and between organizations of different sectors. Many participants recognized the collaborative work between the Clinic for Special Children, Lancaster General Hospital, and Franklin & Marshall College to enhance student learning and research skills. Other collaborative efforts such as the work of local non-profit organizations and medical providers to improve children's access to medical and dental services, and the regionalization of four municipalities in the Denver area were also highlighted.

- ***Inclusion of Diverse Populations***

Lancaster County's population is becoming more diverse. Many activities were noted, such as festivals, community programs and First Fridays, that bring individuals of diverse backgrounds together. Participants also believe that the Latino population is becoming more involved in the community through business and market opportunities.

- ***Preservation of Farmland***

Lancaster County farmland is a hallmark in our cultural heritage. Lancaster 2020 participants believe one of the County's biggest accomplishments is moving towards preserving its heritage through farmland preservation.

- ***Philanthropic Activity of Residents***

County residents give generously to non-profits and communities in need. More than \$800,000 was raised for the victims of the Nickel Mines shootings and a local high school raised \$11,000 for the Miracle Network. But the generosity does not stop there. Despite the slowing economy in 2008, the United Way Campaign was 3% ahead of last year's efforts.

- ***Volunteerism***

In addition to contributing so much financially, county residents give their time to help improve the quality of life of others. Over 3,000 residents take part in the United Way's annual Day of Caring, which makes it the largest Day of Caring per capita in the nation.

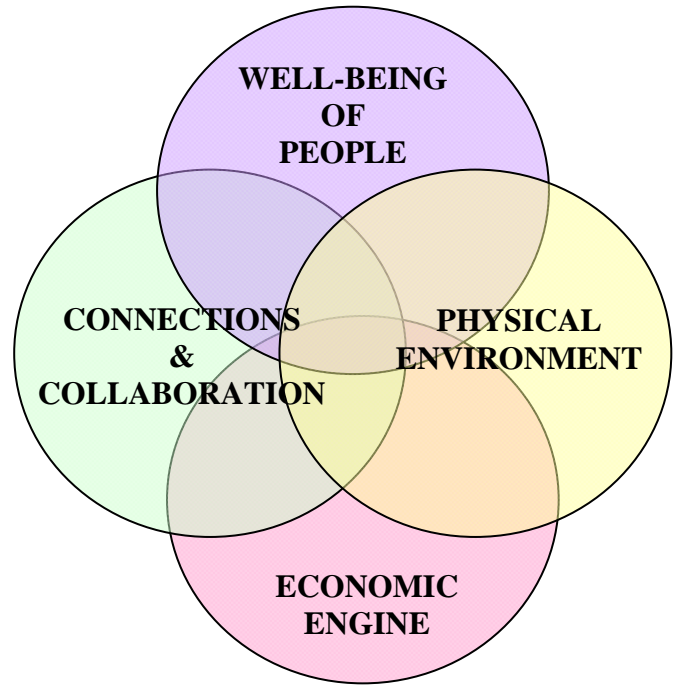
- ***Promotion of Youth Success***

Lancaster County has several programs that support youth success in school. Programs such as Success by Six make sure children get what they need to succeed by leveraging existing resources and bringing together volunteers from business, government, labor, education, health and social service agencies.

Aspirations for a 21st Century Lancaster County

Prior to November 11th, the Lancaster 2020 Steering Committee identified four topics to guide the conversation:

1) The Well-Being of People, 2) Connections & Collaboration, 3) Economic Engine, and 4) Physical Environment. The topics were broad and offered many opportunities to create an even more prosperous, extraordinary and caring 21st Century Lancaster County. During the course of the day, participants discussed 31 strategies or opportunities to shape these areas. Participants were asked, “Which opportunities will best help up enhance [the well-being of our residents/ our connection and collaboration/ our economy/ our physical surroundings and environment]? Why? Participants were then asked to “vote” for the opportunities they believed were the most promising, producing even more information to guide efforts.



This section of the report summarizes the four topic areas and lists all of the opportunities that were discussed and available for vote by all 300 plus participants. Within each topic area, the top opportunities are identified with supporting comments from the table discussions. For each selected opportunity, participants were asked to respond to three questions:

1. *What is already happening in the community to address this opportunity?*
2. *What new action or initiative can we take to best address this opportunity?*
3. *What short term actions can we take that will generate momentum for this opportunity?*

The responses to these questions are detailed below.

Opportunities for Consideration

Well-Being of People

<i>Improve financial stability of residents</i>	44%
<i>Ensure access to quality education</i>	43%
Develop and support parenting and family support programs	22%
Ensure access to healthcare	21%
Increase high-quality early education opportunities for at-risk youth	17%
Develop more safe and affordable housing choices	16%
Increase healthy behaviors and lifestyle choices	15%
Engage the faith-based community to ensure Lancaster’s spiritual health	7%
Establish a Lancaster County safety net to bridge gaps in services	6%

Connections & Collaboration

<i>Reduce duplication and improve efficiency of public services</i>	46%
<i>Increase equity and inclusion</i>	33%
Recruit and train next generation leaders	31%
Increase citizen involvement and volunteerism	29%
Invest in technology and education to improve communication and reduce efficiency	25%
Increase our community’s capacity to debate controversial issues	21%
Invest in new and existing arts programs for diverse communities	8%

Economic Engine

<i>Attract and grow businesses</i>	48%
<i>Improve infrastructure and public services</i>	31%
<i>Align economic and development activities across sectors</i>	30%
Build a green economy	20%
Improve technical and vocational training programs	16%
Develop marketing campaign for Lancaster as a destination for new businesses and college graduates	15%
Retain and attract more college graduates	14%
Provide job training and employment opportunities for ex-inmates	9%
Offer work programs for youth	7%

Physical Environment

<i>Establish innovative land-management zoning practices</i>	54%
<i>Create safe and affordable neighborhoods</i>	41%
Invest in sound environmental practices	36%
Attract residents to urban areas	27%
Promote awareness and understanding of sustainability practices to reduce consumption	23%
Expand public open space and reduce recreation opportunities	11%

NOTE: Participants voted on more than one opportunity in each topic area

Well-Being of People

Protecting the welfare of residents and providing opportunities for success is vital to the continued growth and development of our county. Ensuring that all residents have access to quality education and healthcare – medical, dental, and mental health – and the information and support they need to make healthy lifestyle choice and sound financial decisions is a critical and necessary step.

Top options:

Improve financial stability of residents
Ensure access to quality education

IMPROVE FINANCIAL STABILITY OF RESIDENTS

- *Why will this opportunity help us enhance the well-being of our residents?* There was strong support for working to improve the financial stability of residents. Many suggest this is key to creating other opportunities. Participants believe improving the financial stability of residents will increase Lancaster County's tax base and result in better education, housing, and healthcare services. They also believe that improved financial stability will give residents a sense of personal security and promote greater community participation.
- *What is already happening to address this opportunity?* There are resources available to county residents of all ages to improve their financial literacy, receive additional job training or assistance in finding work, and research housing options. The services provided by PA CareerLink of Lancaster County, Spanish American Civic Association (SACA), the Community Action Program (CAP), and the Volunteer Income Tax Program (VITA) were mentioned most often. Participants also recognize the efforts of area schools to include personal finance classes for their students.
- *What new action or initiative can we take to best address this opportunity?* 1) Publicize educational opportunities (e.g., trade schools, job training and development programs) to improve employability of residents; 2) Incorporate financial literacy for secondary education and adult learning curriculums; 3) Provide quality, low cost childcare to support residents that work outside the home; 4) Educate the business community on living wage versus minimum wage; and 5) Increase affordable housing throughout the county.
- *What short term actions can we take that will generate momentum for this opportunity?* Existing financial literacy/assistance programs must be publicized. There is no lack of services in the community but rather a lack of wide spread awareness about what is available. Specifically, creating a clearinghouse for programs and services was recommended. Another action is to better align public educational programs with Lancaster County's job market.

ENSURE ACCESS TO QUALITY EDUCATION

- *Why will this opportunity help us enhance the well-being of our residents?* Ensuring access to quality education for all County residents impacts both the individual and the community as a whole by improving employability, citizenship skills, and lifestyles.
- *What is already happening in the community to address this opportunity?* Lancaster County is rich with educational programs and institutions. Several organizations offer Pre-K and after school program: the YMCA, CAP, Big Brother/Big Sister, and United Way's Success By Six, to name a few. Many public schools offer free extended day, gifted, and honors programs. Opportunities exist for Lancaster's African American and Latino students to attend Millersville University free of charge through the Lancaster Partnership Program.
- *What new action or initiative can we take to best address this opportunity?* 1) Increase collaboration between schools and human service agencies to identify and assist at-risk students; 2) Develop and fund alternative education for students with unmet needs; 3) Increase funding for empirically-based educational programs with measurable outcomes; 4) Increase funding for state and federal educational mandates; 5) Focus on cultural awareness to foster an environment of inclusion, focusing on language, race, and gender; 5) Identify and adopt best practices for reducing drop out rates; and 6) Consider the consolidation of school systems for greater efficiency and effectiveness.
- *What short term actions can we take that will generate momentum for this opportunity?* Parents must be educated about the importance of early childhood education and made aware of available programs and services. Schools should make efforts to accommodate parent work schedules so parents can attend school functions and seek additional resources for their children (e.g., career services). Funding streams for education must be identified and secured. Another action is to hold a forum between area businesses and local schools to discuss needs and resources that can be shared.

Connections & Collaboration

Citizen participation promotes increased feelings of connectedness and inclusion, helps foster change, and results in improved decision-making. Participation can include volunteering, attending town hall meetings, voting in county, state, and national elections, running for office, or being a community leader. Businesses, local governments and community organizations can work together to establish shared goals and action plans, improving efficiency, and reducing redundant services.

Top options:
Reduce duplication and improve efficiency of public services
Increase equity and inclusion

REDUCE DUPLICATION AND IMPROVE EFFICIENCY OF PUBLIC SERVICES

- *Why will this opportunity help us enhance our connection and collaboration?* Participants noted that government spending can be duplicative, uncoordinated, and inefficient. By creating more unified systems, we can provide a more equitable level of services across the County.
- *What is already happening to address this opportunity?* Efforts to collaborate and reduce the duplication of services are being implemented across the county and across sectors. For example, several municipalities have regionalized public services (e.g., police, fire, etc). In 2007, the Lancaster County Planning Commission along with the Lancaster Inter-Municipal Committee (LIMC), a council of governments representing 13 municipalities including and surrounding the City of Lancaster, worked together to craft and adopt a comprehensive plan for central Lancaster County. Within the City, there has been increased collaboration and shared goals between the James Street Improvement District and the Downtown Investment District.
- *What new action or initiative can we take to best address this opportunity?* 1) Conduct an efficiency study on public services, identifying the greatest impact areas and opportunities to save resources; 2) Develop a County-wide strategic plan with features like incentives for greater efficiency and accountability for services provided; and 3) Perform a service inventory of businesses and non-profit organizations to reveal duplication, identify collaborative opportunities, and needs for additional services.
- *What short term actions can we take that will generate momentum for this opportunity?* Conduct a duplication assessment with municipalities with efforts to identify potential cost savings and methods to improve communication. One recommendation was to ask the County Commissioners to host quarterly municipality meetings to discuss the regional delivery of services.

INCREASE EQUITY AND INCLUSION

- *Why will this opportunity help us enhance our connection and collaboration?* Participants believe that increasing the number of community stakeholders will improve decision-making and ensure everyone has a voice leading to a stronger, more viable community.
- *What is already happening to address this opportunity?* There are several programs within the community developed to increase awareness of and address cultural diversity. The YWCA's Race Against Racism and Day of Commitment, the United Way's Council of Women and Project Blueprint, and the Latino Study conducted by the Workforce Investment Board were mentioned most often. The efforts of area schools to develop immersion programs and host clubs and organizations that support diversity (e.g., GLBT) were also recognized.
- *What new action or initiative can we take to best address this opportunity?* 1) Use business, financial, and personnel resources to expand and improve diversity programs in schools and community centers; 2) Create early education programs that foster the understanding of different cultures and promotes inclusion; 3) Improve transportation system in Lancaster so children have safe paths to school, people have better access to amenities in the community, and better access to jobs; 4) Provide government incentives for businesses to use women-owned and minority-owned businesses; and 5) Create a task force or commission to identify barriers, educate the public about those barriers, and design an action plan to remove barriers.
- *What short term actions can we take that will generate momentum for this opportunity?* Organizations that promote increased awareness of equity and inclusion and opportunities to join must be better publicized. Several organizations with this mission exist but they are not well recognized within the community. Schools, communities, and employers should offer training on diversity and inclusion.

Economic Engine

Communities with highly educated and skilled workers tend to have more jobs with better pay. A strong workforce attracts companies; however we must also create an environment that supports these companies by lowering the cost of doing business here, supporting innovation, improving infrastructure, and investing in new and existing companies.

Top options:

Attract and grow businesses
Improve infrastructure and public services
Align economic and development activities across sectors

ATTRACT AND GROW BUSINESSES

- *Why will this opportunity help us improve our economy?* Participants stressed the need to create jobs, build financial stability and provide vocational training, making the County more attractive to businesses and better able to attract college graduates.
- *What is already happening to address this opportunity?* The Economic Development Company of Lancaster County (EDC) is offering loans to businesses that want to expand and helping to develop marketing plans. The work of Lancaster Prospers, the Workforce Investment Board (WIB), and the Lancaster County Chamber of Commerce & Industry is well regarded. F&M corridor has been successful in attracting and retaining new business.
- *What new action or initiative can we take to best address this opportunity?* 1) Conduct market research to determine new business opportunities; 2) Educate prospective businesses on what Lancaster County incentives exist; 3) Invest in tourism planning and promote the city as an arts destination; 4) Use university and higher education resources to incubate services for technology and green industries; 5) Identify and improve existing small business cooperatives for obtaining affordable health care to break down barriers for entrepreneurs; 6) Conduct gap assessment between available business resources and what services are needed, and 7) Create a local think tank for innovative ideas and business growth.
- *What short term actions can we take that will generate momentum for this opportunity?* One short-term action is to develop a website to house information for new or existing businesses such as tax breaks or incentives and the appeal of Lancaster County (e.g., quality of life, crime statistics, etc.). Another action is to hold a summit to discuss opportunities for businesses and business development. County government and academic institutions should be included in the discussion. Finally, increase the awareness of the Lancaster Planning Commission as a ‘resource hub’ of community actions.

IMPROVE INFRASTRUCTURE AND PUBLIC SERVICES

- *Why will this opportunity help us improve our economy?* Sound infrastructure and public services are essential and will support all other community activities and efforts. By maintaining ‘our house’ we will be better positioned to attract businesses and develop new opportunities.
- *What is already happening to address this opportunity?* In November, Pennsylvanians passed a \$400 million bond issue for water and sewer projects (Lancaster County residents voted 58% ‘Yes’, 42% ‘No’) and municipalities recently completed Act 537 planning to address sewer infrastructure. In addition, the Lancaster County Planning Commission is researching public service sectors and serves as a resource on the topic.
- *What new action or initiative can we take to best address this opportunity?* 1) Increase technology infrastructure; 2) Create walking and bike paths between communities to increase commercial activity; 3) Identify improvements to the current public transportation system by expanding decision processes to include all consumers; 4) Design public transportation around the needs of those who use it most in order to increase overall usage; and 5) Continue to develop an alternative energy infrastructure through strategic planning and zoning.
- *What short term actions can we take that will generate momentum for this opportunity?* Local lawmakers should come together to develop a long-term infrastructure plan and create incentives for using public transportation and carpooling. In addition, some recommend developing specific urban transportation systems (i.e., streetcar) and revising or expanding on city parking initiatives to increase convenience. Attract new business to increase funding for infrastructure and establish consistency between infrastructure improvements and area business needs so the two are working together.

ALIGN ECONOMIC AND DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES ACROSS SECTORS

- *Why will this opportunity help us improve our economy?* Connectivity will improve our collective success and inter-municipal cooperation will drive needed changes.
- *What is already happening to address this opportunity?* There are several organizations working towards aligning economic development activities across sectors. The Economic Development Company, Lancaster County Planning Commission, Lancaster Prospers, Workforce Investment Board, and the Lancaster County Community Foundation are mentioned most often. In addition, the City of Lancaster has a development plan for Northeast and Southwest Lancaster City and the James Street Improvement District and Downtown Investment District serve as a model for collaboration.
- *What new action or initiative can we take to best address this opportunity?* 1) Align the educational institutions with economic development and bring business leaders into the classroom; 2) Revise the county economic plan to bring together different resources from groups already working on various initiatives; 3) Consolidate multiple municipalities' individual rules and regulations; 4) Create an integrated electronic marketing package that connects all economic development pieces and outlines opportunities for new businesses and sites ready for improvement; 5) Increase government transparency and clarify the roles of public officials; and 6) Regionalize municipal services.
- *What short term actions can we take that will generate momentum for this opportunity?* Develop a county economic plan (underway-<http://www.co.lancaster.pa.us/planning/cwp/view.asp?a=477&Q=603711&PM=1>) and a consistent, singular message. In addition, create a transportation and infrastructure plan for the county. Develop an informational website to educate potential businesses on what programs and incentives already exist.



Participants listened to each other's ideas about the well-being of people, connections and collaboration, the economy, and the physical environment. Photo courtesy of Russell G. Frost of frostimaging.com.



Participants at the Lancaster 2020 summit filled the room to deliberate on opportunities for creating an even more prosperous, extraordinary and caring community. People gathered at 32 tables of 10, each with a trained facilitator. Photo courtesy of Russell G. Frost of frostimaging.com.

Physical Environment

Expanding our public open space, preserving our natural resources, investing in sound environmental practices, and revitalizing our urban areas will make our county a more viable place to live. Creating an adequate supply of affordable housing and securing our neighborhoods will increase the safety of our residents and pride in our community.

Top options:

Establish innovative land-management zoning practices
Create safe and affordable neighborhoods

ESTABLISH INNOVATIVE LAND-MANAGEMENT ZONING PRACTICES

- *Why will this opportunity help us enhance our physical surrounding?* Urban planning in high-density areas solidifies a critical tax base. Perhaps more importantly, these practices ensure a proper balance between growth and the preservation of historic and natural resources.
- *What is already happening to address this opportunity?* Lancaster County has made great strides in farmland preservation and watershed protection. The James Buchanan Foundation and the Lancaster County Historical Society are trying to better use historical areas for environmental purposes and recreation. Lancaster County Planning Commission has drafted a Green Infrastructure Plan and a county level comprehensive growth management plan.
- *What new action or initiative can we take to best address this opportunity?* 1) Enhance municipal alignment with the County's Growth Plan; 2) Increase inter-municipal collaboration regarding zoning and land use; 3) Centralize zoning decisions at the County level; 4) Enforce current zoning laws; 5) Increase use of Transfer of Developmental Rights (TDR) to support planning efforts; 6) Increase number of walkways and greenways; and 7) Increase amount of land zoned for high density development.
- *What short term actions can we take that will generate momentum for this opportunity?* Education and awareness would generate momentum. Educational topics include sustainable storm water management, benefits of higher density, basic concepts such as Smart Growth, and reuse and rehabilitative habits. Municipal officials should review and adopt the County's growth management plan.

CREATE SAFE AND AFFORDABLE NEIGHBORHOODS

- *Why will this opportunity help us enhance our physical surrounding?* Safe, affordable housing will attract new residents and young families who bring new energy and opportunity to our county. Our neighborhoods are the building blocks for a healthy community and promote better communication between residents.
- *What is already happening to address this opportunity?* There are many initiatives currently in place to increase the value and attractiveness of county neighborhoods, and not all are able to be listed here. Some examples include the James Street Improvement District, East King Street Improvement District, the Downtown Investment District, Lancaster's Central Market, Lancaster's Eastern Market, First Friday, and numerous resident groups that promote neighbors helping neighbors and neighborhood crime watches.
- *What new action or initiative can we take to best address this opportunity?* 1) Improve street and sidewalk lighting and increase the number of litter receptacles; 2) Follow-up on task force recommendations; 3) Increase the use of Restorative Justice Programs; 4) Re-establish Community Policing Initiatives; 5) Create a "Youth Fridays" event; 6) Develop more pocket parks in urban areas; 7) Use media to create a positive perception of urban areas; 8) Increase home ownership in urban areas; 9) Re-create Council of Neighborhoods to support sustainable community involvement; 10) Establish more affordable housing outside the city; and 11) Build up instead of out to better utilize space.
- *What short term actions can we take that will generate momentum for this opportunity?* Encourage property owners to have a sense of pride and responsibility for their properties. Educate residents on how environmental issues can beautify and create safer neighborhoods. Implement strategic use of street lights, window boxes, and garbage cans. Create a campaign to correct the misperceptions about Lancaster City.