Community and Economic Development

What are our aspirations for an inclusive and equitable Maine?

Community Development
• Have not abandoned rural areas
• Affordable housing aligned w/ income
• Housing is healthy and close to work
• Welcoming and safe for people of color
• No longer using term "from away" and thinking in the manner it suggests
• People can age in place
• People of color in leadership positions
• Keep quality of life in mind

Economic Development
• Everyone has the opportunity to be educated and financially stable
• Minimum wage is a living wage
• Jobs full time, year around and with benefits
• Start ups mirror population
• High speed internet for all
• Transportation not a barrier
• High growth and high impact wth workers from all backgrounds
• Public and private work together

Other
• Language access for all ELL
• Voices heard regardless of $ or influence
• Safety net restored
• Poverty solved
• Access to high quality healthcare for everyone

Why isn't it like that today?

Division and Lack of Collaboration
• Siloed approaches
• Intractible partisanship
• Lack of consensus or coordinated public policy
• We make steps forward and then experience the devasting, backwards political debacles of today
• No shared future collaboration
• Mainers do not trust each other
• Isolation
• Lots of fragmentation

• Geographic and language barriers
• Real or perceived divide between traditional and emerging industries
• Geography and population distribution
• Widening income gap (stagnant wages)
• Division on belief in a competitive economy vs. a cooperative economy

Poor Leadership from Those in Power
• Money equals speech
• Those with power and privilage do not see it
• Lack of leadership
• Political leadership is a barrier
• Groups in power don't want to share
• We're a top down society
• Negative attitudes of state leaders
• Organizations that have held power for decades are not ready to shift power

Fear
• Scarcity narrative
• Fear of scarcity
• Fear of losing ground and a desire to preserve "the good old days"
• Fear mongering
• Fear of discussing difference

Problems Related to Prejudice
• Misperceptions about capacity of different community members
• People of color are less represented
• Implicit bias
• Genders are not supported equally
• Little interaction with people different from us
• Racism
• The state isn't sufficiently diverse

Other
• We are not there yet. It is a slow process
• Competition for resources
• Housing funding either for individuals or for corporations
• Vested interests
• Slow economic growth
• Cynicism and greed
• Self interest
• Budget cuts
• Infrastructure for coordination/collaboration not there in many places
• No planning around transportation
• We are just now starting to ask the right questions
• Rural areas seem not to benefit from creation/sustained economy

- Oppression and our ignorance toward building liberation
- "We" think that people should pull themsleves up by their bootstraps
- Competing priorities
- We don't believe that investing in equity will benefit us all
- Under utilizing our current resources
- Not enough investment in all forms of entrepreneurship
- Deficiency orientation
- Insufficient state funds for education and services
- Poverty and hunger are increasing
- The inaccessibility of information
- High funding competition
- Lack of understanding
- Unwillingness to admit things don't work

What can we begin to do about it?

Add and Amplify Voices
- Use your voice (vote and go to town meetings)
- Speak louder
- Get people talking about what is important to them in their part of the state
- Protest!
- Feed the media
- Get the success stories and feature stories that inspire action
- Common language
- Remove barriers to voting
- Lower financial barriers to public office
- Allow all legislators to have a vote
- Campaign like crazy for politicians that share and perpetuate our values
- Promote civil discourse and engagement
- Call it when you see it
- Authentic dialogue
- Challenge candidates

Build Relationships and Collaborate
- Collaboration (who takes leadership?)
- Trust-building
- Pool funding
- Organize to build new community
- Adopt/sister community programs (northern and southern Maine, cross-cultural experiences)
- Organize activities across different cultures building trust together
- Unexpected partnerships to solve independent problems
- Make a commitment to personally strengthen relationships with those outside your usual circle
- Encourage relationship building through storytelling
- Change inequitable laws and systems
- Bring businesses into diversity dialogue

- Broaden your own social network
- Welcome people
- Build relationships over class lines

Include New People and Those Normally Left Out

- Support new leaders and new stories
- Look for volunteer opportunities that engage a diverse group of people, working together
- Reach out to those who don't share
- Get behind initiatives that help communities of color
- Patronize businesses owned by people new to America
- Fast track certification for immigrants
- Build experiences of equity and inclusion
- Provide access to information in multiple languages

Other

- Public education (get more people to become educators)
- Support leaders who understand their community and arent influenced by outside voices
- Fewer summits and planning, more action
- Teach diverse forms of entrepreneurship
- Pick a bold number and stick to it
- Take risks
- Understand demographics and economic position
- Ranked choice voting
- Encourage lots of paths to success
- Value all higher education paths
- Coordinated housing planning
- Make the time to focus on these issues
- When planning take into account the reality of the situation
- Facilitate economic development in the other Maine
- More worker-owned businesses
- Better funded non-profits
- Flexible work schedules
- Cultivate volunteerism
- Philanthropic leaders to use position for political change
- Universal broadband access
- Anticipate demographic shifts