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 privilege 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 themselves 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 aren't 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