



## **Lincoln County Community Conversation Notes**

### **Second Congregational Church, Newcastle**

**September 1, 2016**

#### **1. What is your vision for Lincoln County?**

- Everyone is mentally healthy
- Everyone has access to affordable and high quality health care
- We are able to retain more of our youth and the average age of the county becomes younger
- We have an effective and integrated approach to addiction
- We have age-friendly communities where everyone can age well across his or her lifespan
- Each person is able to live free from abuse and violence
- We are the healthiest county in America
- We are seen as a great place to live and work
- We have 100% literacy
- We are able to grow our labor force by engaging older workers and providing sustainable jobs for younger workers
- We support young families as they age
- We have an improved transportation system that adequately meets needs
- There is food security for all
- Children and older adults are able to access affordable outdoor opportunities
- We offer quality preschool regardless of income
- We have adequate and affordable workforce and senior housing
- More of our students go on to post-secondary education and succeed
- We have protected our natural and farm-friendly environment
- We have shelters for those who are homeless or victims of domestic violence (or we do not need shelters because we do not have any homelessness or domestic violence abuse)
- We have affordable housing
- We have innovative and high-quality education that leverages our natural resources
- We have a vibrant cultural life for the Midcoast

- Teens have a sense of place
- We promote small business development and have year-round jobs

**2. What are the greatest strengths of communities in Lincoln County?**

- Volunteerism—lots of expertise in different areas to draw from
- Strong sense of community
- Willingness to collaborate
- Unspoiled environment and people working to protect it
- Headquarters of many nonprofits located here (resources)
- Generous residents
- Good sense of taking care of our “own” and sense of responsibility for each other
- Good problem solvers—very focused
- Large and generous part-time population
- Strong and competent small businesses
- Rich cultural life
- Mature and knowledgeable workforce
- Active community of churches
- Excellent schools
- Economically diverse
- Expanding outdoor opportunities and nature-based education
- Cutting-edge marine research centers
- Innovations in many areas and high caliber of expertise (ex. Bigelow)
- Growing numbers of experienced young farmers
- Groups working on alternative energy sources
- Intergenerational programs
- Alternative healing therapies
- Highly skilled first responders who are involved in their communities

**3. What are the greatest challenges of communities in Oxford County?**

- Income disparity
- Thinking and acting regionally (not only by town)
- Lack of transportation for all ages
- Major service centers are located outside of the county
- Lack robust year-round work opportunities
- Getting families to take advantage of scholarship opportunities (ex. FAME, Boothbay)
- Route One!
- Competition among nonprofits for funding and resources
- Lack of affordable housing
- Healthcare community turned inward instead of outward toward communities
- Drugs and crime

- Being able to attract and hire those who will live here
- Lack of affordable and accessible behavioral health resources
- Inconsistent availability and quality of access to broadband
- Lack of available workers due to substance abuse (ex. Construction)
- Lack of good paying jobs with benefits
- Heroin—people are dying—we are losing potential, parents
- Lack of treatment facilities—need more, faster, and better access (including in-patient, intensive, and after care)
- Lack of communication about problems/needs between wealthy summer folks and year-round residents
- Misperception of wealth, which hides poverty and problems
- Waldoboro perceived negatively when they have many great assets
- Diabetes—need education and prevention programs
- Less funding for public education and declining youth population (related issues)
- No local vocational training
- Lack of direct care workers for elderly
- Despair and bullying
- Domestic violence
- Inconsistent services (ex. Peninsula tends to be well served for summer meals and other services but other areas are not)
- Alternative schools drain support for public schools
- Lack of adequate housing for seniors who want to downsize
- Homelessness—people living in cars, boats, etc. and it is not being addressed
- Food insecurity among children and elderly—tends to be invisible
- Need more streets or paths safe for walking and cycling
- Need more handicap accessibility
- Low-income elderly home repair
- Identifying and finding children who are isolated for various reasons
- Antiquated zoning and planning laws to permit age-friendly communities and address preservation of agricultural space
- Addressing related, intersecting problems, not single issues
- Having more racial and ethnic diversity and accepting LGBTQ persons
- Hearing from younger people

#### **4. How can we build on our strengths to address those challenges?**

- Increase access to higher and continuing education and vocational training to keep young people local
- Launch a marketing/branding campaign to show that this is a good place for young families—start by talking to those who are here like young farmers and entrepreneurs

- Conduct comprehensive community design plan that incorporates walkability and affordable housing
- Use MaineCF as a catalyst to address collaboration across counties statewide to keep the conversation going
- Expand affordable access to education (expand ATEC at Lincoln Academy?)
- Using our county-wide newspapers and social media to promote regional issues and programs
- Address multi-generational family issues proactively—to solve senior and low-income housing and care issues
- Engage schoolchildren in community service
- Create a crisis ministry (using churches to form a coordinating group) to focus on key issues
- Use Lincoln County Fund or create a fund for loan forgiveness to attract young people to come (back) to live/work in LC
- Expand and market outdoor opportunities for youth
- Raise the minimum wage and increase opportunities to get those returning from treatment out of the cycle of addiction
- Create a mentoring program to utilize the aging population to mentor youth
- Improve broadband and cellular access county-wide to attract business opportunities and a younger population
- Investigate creating/forming local utilities to accomplish broadband improvements
- Reintroduce home economics/vocational education in schools
- Employers can help attract workers with financial support such as moving costs
- Older adults can volunteer in schools
- Use wealth for scholarships and Lincoln County Fund
- Be business-friendly
- Develop a county-wide approach to addiction
- Understand that problems are inter-related, intersecting
- Democratize information access through broadband
- Establish a county health and wellness office to pool/distribute funding to towns and nonprofits
- Homestead exemption for county taxes—help year-found residents with overall tax burden
- Communicate with and involve part-time and younger residents
- Create scholarships for children of farm families
- Make opportunities for more community farms
- Teach about food, food processing, local produce and products through community kitchens or other collaborative efforts
- Start with storytelling—with going to where people are and listening to those without perceived power

- Convene avenues for community conversations in locations where people already are and feel safe
- Empower people about decision making that will affect their lives—truly partner
- Learn about issues directly from those affected