



**York County Community Conversation Notes
Bonanza Steakhouse, Sanford
March 1, 2016**

1. What is your vision for York County?

- Opportunity for all from bottom to top
- Ending hunger
- Enough affordable housing for everyone
- Healthiest community in the US
- Abundant green space for recreation, health, food production
- Smart growth – focused development on urban corridors
- Better public transportation and connectability
- Improved infrastructure
- Drug free communities
- Support for people working in hospitality industry
- Attractive place for young people
- Sense of hope for everyone
- Universal access to health care
- Vibrant local food and farming
- Vibrant creative communities
- All voices are listened to and heard
- Welcoming community for people of all cultures
- Universal pre-K
- Everyone has access to natural resources
- Everyone has a sense of belonging

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

- Willingness of people to partner and collaborate
- Spirit of philanthropy and pride in one's community
- Strength of our volunteer force
- Quality of our natural resources
- Relative geographic proximity of communities in the county
- York County Community College
- York County public schools
- Location near Portsmouth, Boston, Portland
- Local food and brewing culture
- Entrepreneurship and home-based businesses
- Safe environment
- Great place to raise a family

- Manufacturing jobs with high wages and benefits
- Lots of opportunity for recreational activities
- Lots of opportunity for cultural activities
- Friendly, open, respectful way people treat each other

3. What are the greatest challenges of communities in York County

- Draw of New Hampshire tax structures
- Youth need help developing technical and soft skills, assets
- Lack of resources for arts in schools, especially in smaller towns
- Maintaining volunteer fire departments
- Lack of high speed wireless
- Better understanding the needs of younger population
- Fragmentation of funding into sectors, rather than larger collective impact efforts
- Difficulty working across town boundaries
- Tax structures for farm land
- Brain drain of young people who do not find opportunities to keep them here
- Keeping York County affordable for all people; high cost of living
- Affordable housing for seniors on fixed incomes
- Mental health services not meeting need
- Not enough treatment beds for addiction
- High cost trash and recycling
- Resistance to change; greed
- Impact of time on screens versus natural world for children and adults
- Management of high traffic times on Maine Turnpike
- Relative low wages of healthcare workforce
- Need for more opportunities and facilities for community and family interaction
- Reaching inland communities outside of the turnpike corridor
- Changing ways that people like to volunteer
- Involvement in civics, local government

4. How can we build on those strengths and address those challenges?

- Develop a county-wide marketing strategy, with information on trails etc, including those outside the coastal area. Market to diverse populations.
- Invest in a facilitated process to develop a vision and reach out to young people and inspire hope. What is the image we want to project? What are our collective values?
- Support educational programs in schools that provide kids opportunities to encounter the natural world.
- Change state law to better encourage conservation, especially for small towns.
- Provide opportunities to connect older people and younger people and share their strengths.
- Integrate creative thinkers into the business and civic communities. Get all voices to the table to problem-solve on issues.

- Engage “millennials.” Talk to younger people about what would make them stay in York County.
- Revitalize downtown and village centers: broadband, food movement, arts and culture.
- Promote housing that allows for inter-generational living.
- Support facilitation and leadership development for collaborative efforts. How can we learn to engage diverse populations?
- Support cross-sector, deep, long-term collaborative efforts.