COMMON THEMES FROM FOCUS GROUP MEETINGS

Conducted by Starboard Leadership Consulting. 11 Focus Group Meetings with a total of 118 participants.

- **City Employee Focus Group (8/19/2015 – City Hall Auditorium)**
- **Senior Focus Group (8/25/2015 – Moore Community Center)**
- **Parent Focus Group (9/2//2015 – Moore Community Center)**
- **General Public Focus Group (9/14/2015 – City Hall Auditorium)**
- **Business Community Focus Group (9/15/2015 – Eggs & Issues Meeting – City Hall Auditorium)**
- **Young Professionals (Union Square) – 9/15/2015 – City Hall Auditorium)**
- **City Commissions/Volunteer Groups (9/16/2015 – City Hall Auditorium)**
- **Downtown Ellsworth Association (EEA) and Arts Community (9/23/2015 – City Hall Auditorium)**
- **Healthy Acadia Focus Group – (9/28/2015 – City Hall Auditorium)**
- **City Council Focus Group – 9/29/2015 – City Hall Auditorium)**
- **Management Team Focus Group – (10/15/2015 – City Hall Auditorium)**

Our Vision of Ellsworth in 10 Years

- ❖ A vital, year-round Downeast city serving residents across the region as a source of economic opportunity, arts and cultural experiences, community fellowship and family-oriented recreation. A city that is amenity rich for its size (a delightful surprise to those who are unfamiliar) with a small-town, authentic Maine feel.

- ❖ A Downtown characterized by a mix of locally owned businesses and franchises that exhibit pride in their appearance and quality and, even if owned from afar, are active participants in a collaborative and supportive business community.

- ❖ A pedestrian-friendly Downtown that encompasses a visible and accessible Riverfront and a revitalized and beautified High Street, a blend of retail, dining and entertainment options, and physical amenities that encourage walking, socializing, and simply staying a while.

- ❖ A favorable climate and physical infrastructure (i.e., high-speed IS, incubator spaces, shared services models) for entrepreneurs and small manufacturers to locate and grow their businesses.

- ❖ Clustered development patterns that link dense commercial and housing districts with open spaces and recreation amenities. Various modes of connectivity between clusters (bike/walking trails), and less reliance on roadways, particularly between areas that are adjacent to the Downtown.

- ❖ Neighborhoods that are well kept and that foster connections between neighbors. Neighborhoods that feature walkability, safety and proximity to recreational opportunities, i.e., parks, trail systems, river/waterfront, boating.

❖ A diversity of residents in terms of age and socioeconomic backgrounds who share a common stake in making Ellsworth feel safe, connected, and engaging. A place where residents are not afraid to walk about and there is a palpable sense of neighborhood pride, regardless of housing type or resident demographics.

❖ Housing supply for all incomes, yet particularly for young, career professionals who are ready to participate in Ellsworth's entrepreneurial growth and for retirees of all incomes.

❖ A public school system that attracts and retains families with school-age children for its quality and student engagement.

❖ A City staff that is known for its responsiveness, friendliness, and "can-do" attitude. Public safety personnel who are visible and present in the life of the community.

Based on everything we heard, these are some things that people do not want to see happen and are not part of their vision for Ellsworth's future:

❖ Gentrification

❖ A place that has become "too" expensive to live.

❖ Sprawling development (neither commercial or residential) along the corridors into/out of Ellsworth

❖ High Street as it is today (residents want to see it revitalized (full) and made more attractive); Water Street as it is today ("reclaim" it for greater public access/usage, complementary businesses and housing, and retail/entertainment — make it a destination *within* Downtown).

❖ Empty storefronts.

❖ A predominant retail focus on outlets and other franchises where the intention is to draw visitors.

❖ An amenity mix that is geared more toward visitors/tourists than residents or that is seasonal vs. year-round.

❖ A gateway to Acadia.

❖ A place with fewer public services (i.e., police, fire, public works, etc.)

❖ A place that has become more congested and reliant on road corridors.

❖ A place where the only intact, single-family neighborhoods are out-of-town. Where there is an "over-abundance" of subsidized housing "in-town."

❖ A school system that "bleeds" its best and brightest.