

Maine Strategic Plan – Regional Meeting Summaries

June 2019



Department of Economic
& Community Development

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Part One – Statewide Summary

Introduction and purpose

A series of regional meetings were held in late June 2019 to engage the public in the development of the Maine Strategic Economic Plan. The meetings began with a kickoff event held in Augusta and continued in Portland, Wells, Auburn, Bangor, Farmington, Rockland, Presque Isle, and Machias. At each meeting, participants were given an overview of the initiative and top-level goals and were then asked to brainstorm region-specific barriers and solutions related to those goals. This document provides a summary of the themes that emerged from those barriers and solutions as well as a full transcription of all of the feedback gathered at these events.

The themes that emerged were: broadband, childcare, housing, innovation and entrepreneurship, population growth, regulatory environment, traded sectors, transportation and infrastructure, and workforce development, with an additional “other” category for ideas that did not seem to fit into any of the other themes.

Statewide themes

1. Broadband, Childcare, and Housing are ubiquitous concerns

Broadband - A general lack of reliable, affordable broadband was mentioned in every region that participated. Rural broadband access is a particular concern and appeared in half of the regions. Solutions offered varied by region. Several suggested broadband to co-working spaces, public-private partnerships, or subsidies to increase providers.

Childcare - Seven of the nine regions cited unaffordable childcare as a barrier, and half called to attention the low supply of providers. Solutions that were common included changing the timing of the school day and calendar, using the retired workforce as care providers, and reducing restrictions for providers. One table in Auburn wrote, “It requires almost an entire income to pay for childcare in Maine, both due to low income and high cost.”

Housing – Almost all regions mention a general lack of housing. Seven are concerned that housing is unaffordable. Other regions specifically cite a lack of entry-level housing for young families and workers. Other related concerns include a lack of services for homeowners (such as plumbers and electricians), and difficulty in renovation of existing housing stock. Solutions vary by region, although new investment in housing and investment in micro units and tiny homes were mentioned in several regions. A Bangor participant specifically mentions the need for energy efficiency: “If we provide housing, it needs to be energy efficient.”

2. Across the state, participants are concerned by a lack of research and development (R&D) investment

A lack of R&D spending and activity is listed as a barrier in most regions. Other frequently identified barriers to innovation and entrepreneurship are a lack of high-growth business and industries, low aspirations, and lack of access to capital. Solutions in many of the regions center around improving technology initiatives (in biofuels and nanotechnology, for example), partnerships between business and educational institutions, marketing, and improving the accessibility of business resources.

3. Participants felt that three significant barriers to population growth in Maine were a lack of opportunities, the departure of young people, and widespread challenges for new Mainers

Each of these barriers were mentioned in six of the nine regions surveyed. Often these three issues are intertwined with one another – for example, one Portland participant writes, “Young immigrants can’t find jobs so they are moving towards opportunities and diversity.” Encouraging immigration and creating a more welcoming environment are the focus of solutions in multiple regions. Many regions also offer solutions to retain young people specifically. Half of the regions note that marketing is an important solution to population growth. In Rockland, for example: “Our job market needs a marketing message. We have jobs and a great place to live – we are a good option. Keep existing and attract from away.”

4. High taxes, regulations, and inconsistent administration are significant barriers in all regions

Every region called attention to high taxes and tax burdens for both individuals and businesses, seven make note of various permitting/regulation requirements that hinder small business development, and five note discontinuity and inconsistent administration. For example, a Portland participant notes an “unpredictable business environment due to current ability to pass referendums,” while a Bangor participant cites regulations relating to paid family leave and overtime as adding to already-high business costs. Solutions are ubiquitously in favor of lowering taxes and expanding tax credits, as well as reducing and streamlining regulations.

5. Most regions are in favor of expanding exports

There is a general lack of consensus on both barriers and solutions relating to traded sectors. The most-mentioned barriers are few value-added sectors (4 regions), a lack of industry diversity (3 regions), and lack of access to global markets and export infrastructure (3 regions). Five of the nine regions recommend expanding export capacity and global reach for Maine products. Industrial strategy and sector partnerships were also mentioned as solutions several times.

6. A lack of public transportation is felt statewide

All nine regions list a lack of public transportation as a barrier. Poor roads were noted by half of the regions. Juxtaposed with these barriers is the concern that workers have few options for getting to work. Solutions were almost ubiquitously to implement or expand public transportation, with three regions suggesting the expansion of passenger rail service. In York County, for example, participants suggest a morning train from Wells to Portland as well as a high speed train to Boston. Three regions also suggest ridesharing such as Uber as a possible solution for adding transportation options. Another popular solution (3 regions) was the construction of an East-West highway to connect Western Maine to facilitate trade with Canada.

7. Workforce development

Workforce development was the most popular topic, with the most barriers and solutions listed in most regions. There was strong consensus on both barriers and solutions, and those listed in this document are only the most popular of the many that were suggested. There were two barriers that were mentioned in every single region: limited training opportunities and a lack of skills. These pair with several other concerns, each of which were mentioned in at least five regions: disconnects between education and the job market, low wages, student loans, lack of workforce, lack of education and advanced degrees, and underemployment/job mismatch. There were five frequently suggested solutions: expansion of training and accessibility of training, expansion of CTE and trade education for grades K-12, creating more internship and apprenticeship opportunities, better collaboration of both universities/colleges and businesses in guiding job seekers to opportunities, and a streamlined credentialing system to improve opportunities for both immigrants and workers wishing to upskill.

8. Self-identity, perceptions, and public health concerns persist statewide

There were many diverse concerns and potential solutions mentioned in the “other” category, ranging from downtown parking issues to food insecurity. There was a consensus on two primary categories, however:

- 1) poor perceptions and marketing, and
- 2) public health – healthcare costs and accessibility, along with mental health and substance abuse

The most-cited barrier in the first category was a poor regional self-identity (seven regions) along with poor marketing, negative perceptions, and generational and cultural divides (five regions each). One Portland participant notes a “poor external messaging for opportunity,” whereas Rockland participants call to attention “Self-deprecating attitudes,” and suggest that we “work on the current school cohort to highlight where truth deviates from the narrative.” Solutions related to marketing were the most frequent solution in the “other” category, being mentioned in five regions.

Public health is another primary concern for participants. Healthcare was listed as a barrier in seven of the regions, and drug use, specifically the opioid epidemic, was noted in six. While solutions were few, two of the more frequent solutions offered were affordable healthcare and investment in mental health and substance abuse.

Part two – Regional Summaries

Auburn

Broadband:

Lack of broadband was identified as a barrier to economic development, especially as it impacts education, healthcare and the workforce. Proposed solutions are subsidies, an increase in providers, and franchise agreements.

Childcare:

Childcare is a general concern for Auburn participants. Several solutions were offered, such as more public Pre-K, relaxed regulations, cooperative workspaces, and utilizing the retiring population as child caregivers, among others.

Housing:

Participants are concerned that there is not enough investment in housing, due to factors such as code issues and financing gaps. Participants also note that lack of housing hurts the desirability of their areas. No solutions were offered, although one table noted that any solution for housing must be tied in with transportation and climate.

Innovation and Entrepreneurship:

Lack of capital investments and barriers to accessing funds and lending, along with low aspirations are the primary concerns at this meeting. Solutions include improving access for young people in the form of opportunity education and awareness, as well as an improved funding application process.

Population growth:

Little was mentioned about population growth. One concern was that it is difficult to compete with Portland nearby. Solutions involved creating a better business culture and attracting young people.

Regulatory Environment:

Participants are particularly concerned about the welfare cliff – that people lose benefits too steeply after transitioning from welfare benefits into a new job. Few solutions were offered, other than improving the transition off welfare.

Traded Sectors:

Participants are concerned that automation is replacing manufacturing jobs and increasing the skill necessary for existing jobs. Solutions focus on sector partnerships and exploration of more value-added manufacturing opportunities.

Transportation and Infrastructure:

Participants identified the ease of transportation including lack of car ownership and lack of public transportation as a barrier to getting to work, as well as road conditions. Solutions are a combination of incorporating better public transportation along with innovative options such as ride sharing and rail service.

Workforce Development:

Workforce development is at the forefront of this region's concerns. Among many barriers, a lack of trainers and difficulty of recredentialing are two common themes. Expediting credentialing and various options for increasing the number of skills trainers are among solutions.

Other:

Participants are concerned about several issues specific to the Lewiston-Auburn area, such as lack of attention towards cultural assets, immigration policy, and attitudes and perceptions towards the region. Proposed solutions are generational shifts in perceptions and attitudes, educating the local community on assets and opportunities, and placing more emphasis on the region's successes.

Augusta

Broadband, Childcare, and Housing

Many cited a lack of these services as barriers to Maine’s economic prospects. However, recommendations for these three themes largely entailed general increased investment without additional detail. The negative impact of lackluster broadband access received some specific discussion, e.g. “the lack of access to it in Maine hinders not only tech-related businesses, but manufacturers, healthcare, and small businesses.” A few tables noted the constraints of childcare, with recommendations encouraging more facilities. A lack of affordable or available housing received many mentions, but again, solutions were mostly general statements supporting further investment. Two exceptions were ideas to “incentivize older home purchases/renovations” and to create “a comprehensive housing policy that addresses more than just low-income and first-time home buyers.”

Innovation and Entrepreneurship

Summit attendees saw a lack of funding as the primary bottleneck at nearly every stage of the R&D pipeline, as well as for small business in general. Low R&D spending, an absence of venture capital, low incentives for entrepreneurs, especially in rural areas, a gap for smaller businesses looking to raise equity, and a lack of capital investment were all cited. For small businesses, capacity issues were a common theme, including operational know-how and access to capital. There were also concerns of low aspirations for firms of all sizes—larger companies not interested or able to invest in research or new product development and small business not interested in growing or not knowing how.

Solutions focused on increasing investment wherever it was lacking. Participants called for large increases in R&D spending, as well as creating innovation-related incentives, such as for patent creation and research collaboration. There were also proposals for in-kind support through investment in incubators, labs, and convening research entities. Suggestions to increase access to capital included cooperatives as a method for self-investment and bond funds to target mid-size, growing companies and provide seed capital to start-ups. To build business capacity, they recommended increasing the visibility of resources like FAME, MTI, and others, including among students.

Population Growth

Closely related to workforce development, growing the sheer number of workers in the state received significant attention. As a barrier, the perception that Maine simply does not have the same level of opportunity as other states stood out. This both pushes young people out of Maine and prevents people—and their families—from moving in. For the latter problem, Maine’s skepticism of people from elsewhere posed an additional barrier. The dollars-and-cents calculation of living in Maine was another, with wages for comparable work often being lower than in other states, yet cost of living is still high. It was also perceived by participants that the vibrancy of communities may be weakening in parts of the state through forces like the opioid crisis.

The vast majority of solutions in this category were variations of marketing the state as a great place to live.¹ The plan, put succinctly, was for “Live + Work in Maine on steroids”. It should focus on young people, converting tourists, college students, and camp attendees into residents. One specific idea was to “attract immigrant families from Boston by developing and marketing the best ESL program in New England.” In addition to a statewide marketing campaign, business were called upon to play a role. When recruiting a

¹ This in part reflects the fact that solutions to the underlying problems of few job opportunities and high cost of living fall under other categories, e.g. increasing affordable housing construction.

potential employee from outside the state, they could work to connect that individual's significant other to employment, since potential residents are concerned about their whole family's prospects. To back all of this up, there were also recommendations to create or expand incentives for living and working in the state, most notably the loan forgiveness program and a potential remote work incentive.

Regulatory Environment

Taxes, regulatory uncertainty, "NIMBYism", and scattered resources and plans were participants' top concerns under the umbrella of regulatory environment. When mentioned, taxes were seen as either too high or poorly structured. Regulatory concerns stemmed from inconsistencies between different localities and uncertainty about the fate of certain incentives, taxes, or regulations, in part because of the volume of bills from the legislature. Local opposition to investment was seen as too common and too effective at holding up or preventing development. And a lack of strategy and coordination within and between governments held back effective policymaking.

Many called for improvements to various aspects of the regulatory process. This began with the lawmaking system, with suggestions to more deeply include legislators in road-mapping and to limit the introduction of bills. At the other end of the process, they recommended streamlining the permitting process, making it faster and easier for firms. Relatedly, regionalizing and better coordinating governance and regulation was given as a solution to confusing, uncertain processes for businesses and a potential way to reduce government costs. Ideas to identify and adopt best practices included creating an "exchange program" with other states to learn what they do and setting up an "ambassador system for economic development" to different levels of government.

Traded Sectors

No single barrier defined the discussion of traded sectors. However, many fit the general theme of challenges capturing more value from existing industries, with tourism and agriculture receiving specific mentions. Trade issues were a related topic of concern, focused on inadequate export infrastructure and a lack of knowledge of how to export products. Proposed solutions centered on building the Maine brand, both by expanding its reach and targeting it to specific markets, e.g. across the North Atlantic. Other proposals varied by industry, largely focused on investing in and modernizing the natural resource/bioeconomy sectors. Renewable energy and tourism were also targeted for investment.

Transportation and Infrastructure

The state of infrastructure in Maine was a point of substantial concern for attendees. Transportation was seen as a statewide problem encompassing not only the condition of basic infrastructure like roads and bridges but also the widespread lack of public transportation services. Freight transportation was a point of concern given that the state's rail system is aging and businesses are heavily reliant on trucking. Maine's geography served to amplify these challenges, from the peninsulas and islands of the coast to the general dispersion of the state's many rural communities. Most solutions involved improved infrastructure funding, with specific proposals including the development of a "Marine Highway", better logistics support and east-west connections, and infrastructure for autonomous vehicles. Water/sewer and energy production and efficiency were also cited as areas in need of support.

Workforce Development

Constituting roughly a quarter of all the notes taken, workforce development was the most popular topic of discussion. Participants clearly saw workforce challenges as some of the greatest barriers to the development of Maine's economy. Specifically, they cited a general disconnect between the education system and the job

market, with working-age people not ending up with the training and education that employers are looking for. There were three primary hypotheses for why this was happening. The first was organizational—that higher education systems were not sufficiently coordinated within or between themselves or in tune with employers. Second, barriers in the lives of workers/learners, especially funding, prevented adequate education. Third, misperceptions among students and parents of the value of trades, manufacturing work, and other careers that involved anything “less” than a four-year degree meant too few people were pursuing in-demand, well-paid jobs.

Proposed solutions largely reflected these three barriers. Participants called for investment up and down the education chain, from starting technical education earlier in K-12, better utilizing CTEs, expanding community colleges and other trade programs, and honing in certificate and continuing education programs. Building out the pathway from education to the workforce, internship and apprenticeship programs saw strong support. In part a solution to the issue of funding, apprenticeships (supported by companies/unions, the state, or all of the above), were a way to ensure targeted training. There were proposals to promote trades in schools, target parents to change their understanding of trade work, and create a “traveling roadshow of employers” that would show high schoolers the type of good, high-paying jobs available in Maine. Additional ideas included fixing the difficulties immigrants face in translating their skills and education into credentials and improving the job pipeline for the formerly incarcerated to reduce recidivism.

Bangor

Broadband:

Participants cite broadband numerous times, particularly its ability to offer growth to businesses and remote workers.

Childcare:

Participants identified childcare as an issue, particularly costs and the accessibility of childcare as well as low wages and opportunity for childcare and caretaking workers. Proposed solutions include amending the school year, increasing wages for childcare workers, and using payment for childcare as a tool to attract young families.

Housing:

Limited affordable housing options was also a focus. It was noted that this goes together with the childcare issue, and that new housing projects must prioritize energy efficiency.

Innovation and Entrepreneurship:

Main challenges are a lack of corporate headquarters and R&D funding in Maine. Solutions are more focused on financial literacy education and options for growing small businesses.

Population growth:

The primary barriers listed are perceptions, graduates leaving the state, and lack of new Mainers. Many proposed increasing and improving the marketing of the Maine lifestyle as a solution to attract and retain young people and families, as well as embracing immigration.

Regulatory Environment:

Participants were predominantly concerned about taxes, specifically business taxes. Additionally, new regulations such as a new paid time off policy were listed as barriers. Solutions were recommendations for lowering taxes.

Traded Sectors:

Seasonality related to the tourism industry in rural and coastal Maine seems to be the main concern for these participants. Solutions include ideas to bridge part-time and seasonal jobs to year-round work.

Transportation and Infrastructure:

A lack of reliable transportation and transit, particularly in rural areas, as well as deterioration of downtowns are primary concerns among these participants. Creation of an East/West Highway, public transit and downtown revitalization are three proposed solutions.

Workforce Development:

Many participants call out two primary barriers, lack of training opportunities and lack of awareness and communication of opportunities. Several participants offer the creation of a central job search hub as a solution, as well as promoting entry into trade programs.

Other:

Common themes among the uncategorized are the Opioid crisis, healthcare and associated costs, and costs of living in Maine.

Farmington

Broadband:

Lack of broadband was identified as a barrier to economic development. The solutions proposed were to increase broadband and create public and private partnerships to fund broadband.

Childcare:

Childcare was identified as a barrier. There were no solutions proposed.

Housing:

Barriers included the cost of living and affordable housing and the type of housing people are looking for. Solutions proposed were to find a way to attract housing developers and to find a cost-effective way to live and work.

Population growth:

Barriers included an aging population and lack of opportunities for young people. Solutions proposed were to encourage immigration and to find a way to keep University of Farmington students in the area.

Regulatory environment:

High taxes, state stormwater law, and local planning regulations were all identified as barriers. Solutions proposed were Chapter 500 state stormwater law, lower taxes, reduce permit timeframes, and reduce energy costs.

Traded sectors:

The solution proposed was to expand UMaine wood products.

Transportation and (non-digital) infrastructure:

Barriers include limited public transportation, high traffic volume, lack of funding for transportation, and transportation for shipping products. Solutions were to expand regional public transportation.

Workforce development:

Barriers include low skilled workforce, aging employees and employers, lack of trade professionals and trade schools, seasonal jobs, hiring challenges, and student loan debt. Solutions proposed were tuition forgiveness, expand trade and technical centers, encourage collaboration with schools and businesses, and support UMF.

Innovation and entrepreneurship:

Barriers include having seasonal businesses, not enough small business loans, heavily comprised of small businesses, and lacking high income, high growth companies. Solutions proposed were growing the businesses we already have, building a system for keeping small businesses going after original owner retires, destigmatize marketing, and model companies like MBNA.

Other:

Barriers included the weather/climate, economic development not being a priority, health insurance, lack of capital investments, and the opioid crisis. Solutions include benchmarking, looking at other states, and increasing funding and grants.

Machias

Broadband:

Participants cited broadband as a barrier to economic development several times. The proposed solutions were to expand broadband and digital equity through the public sector.

Childcare:

Childcare was cited many times as a barrier. There only proposed solution was to create free child care.

Housing:

The discussion focused on a limited availability of affordable and rental housing, as well as vacant downtown buildings and zoning. In addition to building more affordable housing, solutions included the creation of mixed-use neighborhoods; the use of tiny homes for affordable housing; and using dorms as housing for seniors.

Innovation and Entrepreneurship:

Barriers included financial pressure on small businesses, a lack of innovation and investment, a lack of supports for entrepreneurs, and seasonality. Common proposals were for business incubators and accelerators, entrepreneurship education, and public-private partnerships, particularly with universities.

Population Growth:

A lack of immigration and retention of young people were the top listed barriers. The proposed solutions were to increase efforts to retain young people and increase immigration.

Regulatory Environment:

The most-referenced barriers were high taxes and regulations in general. Solutions ranged from getting rid of frivolous lawsuits and regulations to increasing collaboration and increasing the minimum wage.

Traded Sectors:

Barriers included a lack of economic diversity and overreliance on resource extraction. Solutions were to expand the tourism season, attracting businesses with tourism marketing, and investing in growth sectors.

Transportation and Infrastructure:

Infrastructure was cited as a barrier multiple times, with transportation getting many mentions. Solutions included general infrastructure investment and creating a van pooling system modeled after Vermont's.

Workforce Development:

Barriers focused on the lack of adequate workforce education, both due to poor investment and character and health issues with workers. The proposed solutions were to invest in apprenticeship programs, tech ed programs, and hospitality programs while increasing awareness of what's available.

Other:

Uncategorized barriers were very broad, although healthcare came up 2-3 times. Solutions ranged from creating a national healthcare system to investing in economic research focused on Maine.

Portland

Broadband

Meeting attendees note a general lack of adequate broadband as a barrier. They note that every Mainer should have access to a gig, that there should be a fully accessible fiber-based network, and that there should be high-speed community co-working centers.

Childcare

A general lack of affordable childcare is the main barrier outlined. They suggest reducing restrictions on home-based daycare as a solution.

Housing

A lack of affordable housing, specifically in Southern ME and urban areas is called to attention. Solutions include modifying zoning to concentrate affordable housing development, eliminating limits on multi-family housing, and promoting more micro housing units, among others.

Innovation and entrepreneurship

Barriers include a lack of investment in both capital and R&D, as well as a lack of entrepreneurship, among others. Solutions include promoting entrepreneurship through education, small business support and strategic investment.

Population growth

3 main barriers were a growing generational divide, various barriers to immigration, particularly attitudes, and not enough opportunity within Maine to attract newcomers. Solutions include better marketing and a better environment for immigrants, as well as using education opportunities as a tool to attract young people.

Regulatory environment

High taxes, business licensing regulations, and insufficient support from government agencies such as DECD are the primary concerns of participants, among others. Many solutions were offered, though most prominent and frequent were better land use planning and various types of tax changes (gas, income, sales).

Traded Sectors

Participants believe there is a lack of focus on lobstering and fishing industries. Solutions are to prioritize North Atlantic trade and targeting specific sectors for investment.

Transportation and Infrastructure

Primary barriers are a general lack of adequate transportation, especially public transportation, as well as crumbling and deteriorating infrastructure (highways). Solutions are investment in rail (N-S ME, micro rails for worker mobility) and better, faster transportation alternatives.

Workforce Development

Participants note a lack of necessary skills and training to achieve the skill sets needed in the Maine workforce. Second, they note that the immigration population is not fully able to access the labor market due to credential and licensing requirements, among other barriers like low wages. Solutions include improving internship and apprenticeship programs and putting a focus on education through utilizing public universities and creating various types of loan forgiveness programs.

Other

Participants are concerned that Mainers are reluctant to change, that healthcare (including substance abuse and mental health) is not accessible and not affordable, and that there are limits to the access and quality of education, among many others. Solutions in the “other” category are many, and include more investment and focus on green energy and the benefits that Maine faces with climate change, better investment in children and social programs, and better cultural environment by attracting filmmakers and building a new convention center in Portland.

Presque Isle

Broadband:

Barriers to economic development include the lack of broadband. There were no solutions offered.

Childcare:

Barriers include the lack of affordable childcare and access to childcare. There were no solutions offered.

Housing:

Barriers include the lack of understanding of low income living. There were no solutions offered.

Population growth:

Barriers include the population growth, population decline, number of retirees, generational poverty, and that we can't attract or retain people. A solution offered was to create better opportunities for increase number of available people.

Innovation and entrepreneurship:

Barriers include funding for new businesses and lack of industrial agriculture. Solutions offered were to recognize financial package to bring business into Maine, keep solutions local, money for marketing, money for R&D universities and colleges, tax models to entice existing businesses, more educational opportunities for business and to fund high tech opportunities.

Regulatory environment:

Barriers include the cost of energy and transportation, highly regulated insurance industry, welfare, and taxes. Solutions offered were to create property tax incentives to move to more rural areas and to address highly regulated insurance industry

Traded sectors:

Traded sectors was not mentioned.

Transportation:

Barriers include access to transportation and roads. Solutions include more public transportation, rail improvements, air cargo, increase the private industry, and have quicker transportation

Workforce development:

Barriers include labor shortage, low participation in workforce, wages, foreign workers, cost of education, and lack of support and opportunities with education. Solutions include more investment into k-adult education, support businesses to support education, career centers, and student debt elimination program.

Other:

Barriers include location, mindset, digital literacy, opioid, mental health, and health care affordability. Solutions include collaborating with Canada, promote rural Maine, improve marketing careers, and lower barriers to entry.

Rockland

Broadband:

Generally, a lack of reliable broadband concerns Rockland participants. Expanding availability through public/private partnerships and more county-level engagement are the solutions that are offered.

Childcare

Childcare availability and its inability to meet demand are noted. Solutions include expanding Pre-K and combining elderly housing with childcare.

Housing

Lack of affordable housing and a lack of services for homeowners (plumbing, electricians, doctors) are the primary concerns related to housing. Expanding the development of starter homes and entry-level housing are mentioned as potential solutions.

Innovation and entrepreneurship:

Low aspirations was mentioned three times, and seems to be the main concern along with access to capital and tax burden as barriers to innovation and entrepreneurship. Expanding R&D and embracing new technology/the new economy are listed among several solutions.

Population Growth

Participants are concerned about aging population, low retention of young, educated individuals, and low levels of in-migration. Solutions were to strategically play off the strengths of other growing urban centers in Maine, and improve marketing and engagement with young people.

Regulatory Environment

Taxes and the cost of government are the primary concerns among participants. Suggested solutions were to increase the role of county decision-making and to lower the tax burden for individuals and businesses.

Traded Sectors

Participants list a lack of access to broader market and diverse industries as barriers. Including farming and fishing in sector planning as well as increasing exports are listed as solutions.

Transportation and Infrastructure

Lack of public transportation, cost of commercial transportation, and reliance on federal airport services are the barriers noted by participants. Solutions focus on interstate infrastructure including construction of an East-west highway, giving toll preference to locals, and seeking alternatives to I95 dependence.

Workforce Development

Participants note a lack of training/credentialing, lack of awareness of future opportunities and barriers to education as barriers to workforce development. Solutions include improving CTE exposure and forging collaborations between communities and higher education.

Other

Two main themes stick out. 1) negative attitudes and perceptions and lack of celebration of successes, and 2) lack of resources for substance abuse and mental health. Other concerns are food insecurity, healthcare costs, and lack of local planners. Solutions are more marketing outside of Maine and better control of opioid distribution.

Wells

Broadband:

Generally, a lack of broadband is noted as a barrier. Solutions include expanding access through state and federal funding and using it to attract homeowners in rural places.

Childcare:

Childcare costs and access are identified as barriers to economic development. Solutions include expanding childcare tax credits and changing school start times to work with workforce and childcare needs.

Housing:

A lack of affordable and safe housing was mentioned throughout the meeting and was at the forefront of York County participants. Solutions were ubiquitously centered around changing zoning practices to allow for higher-density housing options.

Innovation and Entrepreneurship:

Concerns focus on a lack of R&D and investments. Solutions center on technology, noting the need for automation and investment in educational programs such as robotics at the high school level, among others.

Population growth:

Participants draw attention to the challenges for new Mainers and lack of attention to trends that attract young people. Solutions include facilitating immigration through welcome centers and community awareness and education.

Regulatory Environment:

Taxes, especially relating to education costs, were the primary concern around the regulatory environment. Several options for reducing taxes were offered as solutions, as well as a streamlined regulatory process.

Traded Sectors:

The industrial makeup provides some concern, including a lack of industrial diversity and incompatibility of significant industries in the region. Solutions are re-investing in mills and encouraging international trade.

Transportation and Infrastructure:

Transportation access and costs for both individuals and commerce are listed as barriers. Solutions are expansion of public transportation, including expanded rail service to Portland and Boston, as well as incorporating ride sharing.

Workforce Development:

York county participants perceive a lack in both supply and demand of labor, citing few opportunities and few people available to work, as well as a lack of training coordination as the primary barriers. Solutions offered are expanding training and credentialing opportunities as well as marketing Maine as a location for remote work.

Other:

Various other concerns are listed. Opposition to change, low reading scores, lack of communication, lack of amenities, and poor branding/reputation among others are among them. More robust communication between institutions, investment in education, and marketing the successes and way of life in Maine are some of the solutions offered.

Part three – Table Note transcriptions

Auburn

Barriers

Solutions

<u>Broadband</u>	<u>Broadband</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broadband • Lack of affordable, high speed broadband impacts education, workforce, healthcare • Lack of infrastructure – affordable highspeed broadband in rural areas, transportation to allow people to work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could there be broadband franchise agreements like cable franchise agreements? • State needs to help bring in more options – limited number of providers. State not giving it the importance int deserves. State could subsidize to get over economic hump. Could there be broadband franchise agreements, like cable? • Cell towers
<p><u>Childcare</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transportation housing and childcare challenges • Childcare availability – across Maine. • It requires almost an entire income to pay for childcare in Maine, both due to low income and high cost. • Childcare burden is extra for people from away who don't have family network. 	<p><u>Childcare</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More public Pre-K. Loosen up childcare regulations to make easier for at home care. Baby boomers retiring incentive to care for children. Collaborative of several businesses to build one local day care for staff. • Co-op workspace with childcare, collection of employers gain spots at daycare providers, non-traditional (retired workforce) • System to help people stay in jobs – childcare X% of income and become successful • Presque Isle – coop working space that includes childcare MCF and MDF are looking into this model. • Bringing together smaller childcare providers (licensing is the burden here, requires leasing space) • Tapping into retiring workforce more for nontraditional, maybe part-time work (maybe childcare?) • Collection of businesses that can come together and sponsor spots at local childcare providers. • Pre-k support to fill in where family doesn't help.

<p><u>Housing</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tired housing stock means you need to put more money into a house to fix it up, even if it is cheaper upfront. Hard to get financing. Code issues for redeveloping large downtown building. Filling financing gap for rehabbing these buildings is tough • Transportation housing and childcare challenges • Affordable housing • Desirability of place to live – housing, education, amenities • Housing isn't invested in enough 	<p><u>Housing</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tie-in transportation and housing issues into climate plan as well. They are workforce and climate problems. • Zoning – certain amount of affordable houses along with higher level/ increase density of lot size – build up
<p><u>Innovation and entrepreneurship</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital investments lacking • Lack of startup capital • Venture capital lacking due to lack of ROI • Lending puts undue burden on financial operations • Applying for funds is burdensome • Capital Investment • Aspiration of this region in innovation is low • Incentives to compete with other regions/states • Small business owners skilled in providing services unskilled in business operations 	<p><u>Innovation and entrepreneurship</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify more opportunities for collaboration of people from different perspectives to develop solutions • Reduce the complexity of application process • Connect young people to the innovative business opportunities in L/A metro region • Internships, apprenticeships, paid experiential learning, job shadowing • Business owners need to understand need and remedies of educational services
<p><u>Population Growth</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proximity to markets with higher opportunities ie Portland 30 minutes away 	<p><u>Population growth</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kids coming back if there are jobs • Kids following parents into Maine; summer campers in Maine • Create business culture to attract and hold people
<p><u>Regulatory Environment</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefits cliff. No transition system. The day you get your paycheck, your housing assistance goes down. • Burdensome regulatory issues • Cost of taxes compared to NH/Florida • Benefit system - no transition system • Welfare benefit/US Employment benefits to incent people into workforce 	<p><u>Regulatory Environment</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs to be much easier transition off benefits. Ensures what people are gaining by working is not lost by losing benefits. • Study how Maine compares against other states with regulatory burdens • Need to create incentives to encourage participation • Better connectivity between high school local business and higher education institutions.

<p><u>Traded Sectors</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manufacturers automating to account for losing workforce, but then those jobs require more skills that not everyone has • Healthcare – large employment doesn’t add to GDP • Trade, Transportation, Medicine, Education – don’t add to GDP 	<p><u>Traded Sectors</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need regional economic and industry strategies that tie back to the state plans • Explore value added opportunities in the manufacturing sector in the L/A region • Develop support to help sector specific growth • Sector partnerships • Accessing industries to spur interest
<p><u>Transportation and Infrastructure</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transportation housing and childcare challenges • Large number of people lack personal transportation or license, insurance, reliable vehicle • Lack of public infrastructure – doesn’t match work hours of local companies • Transportation • Transportation – difficulty getting people between cities and rural areas. Even just between Auburn and Lewiston. • Funding for public transportation connectivity • Condition of roads – commerce & infrastructure • Lack of infrastructure, transportation to allow people to work 	<p><u>Transportation and Infrastructure</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bus – intercity out reaching business areas. Rail Service for long haul. Last mile – city link – Uber, lift, turo, walkable downtowns • Better public transportation (variable route) get from home to work – climate planning • Redevelopment more affordable – block grants, tax credits, non-traditional financing to ensure rehab and new construction • Redeveloping the buildings we have is the most sustainable thing. Better than building new.
<p><u>Workforce Development</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing and education. Lewiston companies have a hard time recruiting high-income employees because K-12 system is more appealing in Portland areas. • Wages are so much lower here for the same job compared to other places. • Lack of trainers for jobs needed ie CDL trainers – ties to overall issues of access options for educational attainment and too much emphasis on 4 year degrees • Incentives to bring trainers to Maine or tap into older experienced workers as trainers – network • Lack of resources to integrate nontraditional workers • Lack of time for training 	<p><u>Workforce Development</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with K-12 to develop workshops around skills needed for today’s jobs (not only at 6th or 7th grade) • Regionalizing supply chain opportunities expanding the local opportunities for jobs • Support for trailing spouses • Emphasize getting migrants (international and domestic) their credentials. Fast track certification program for those folks. Other state examples? Minnesota? • Condense the certification process. Potential differences between countries. Balanced with the fact that they need to support themselves in the mean time. • Incentives to bring trainers to Maine – or tap into older, experienced workers as trainers

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational attainment – lack of trainers for jobs needing employees. Invest in people. Pathways to CTE Careers were discouraged. • Too much emphasis on 4-year college – need better connection with CDL not enough trainers for this license. • Issue with older workers and immigrants being able to find meaningful work • Isn't an infrastructure in place to allow seasonal jobs to transition into other season jobs and carry their health benefits. Lack of continuity of benefit – id gap filler is unemployment • Low wages – support workers not value added or higher wage jobs in this region • Barriers in this area to grow the workforce with immigrants and potential entrepreneurs • Non livable minimum wage • Lack of access to paid training (OJT – apprenticeship, upskilling) • Workforce – numbers and skills • Integration of New Americans into mainstream. Credential of people who can't work here • Bring people in to work from non-traditional areas • Low skilled workforce • Credential transfer • Lack of workforce: They're aging out and don't see a way to backfill it • Preparing people to get into skill training. We do that training well but hard to get people into it. • A lot of people don't have drivers' licenses • Difficulty transferring credentials into US for migrants. Costly for people coming from other states as well. • 9-12 population not aware of opportunities and skills • Incentivize non-employed • Upskill – educating businesses to benefits of in house training/apprenticeship • New way of thinking about tech/trade career path 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with businesses to develop curriculums that mirror employment needs • Promoting programs that re-tool and remarket unmarketable workforce • Work from home, flex time • Paid training – upskilling, ESL, workplace ESL • Skills training at the community college level • Match industry with classrooms. Early educational experience. • Invest in youth employment opportunities. – apprenticeships, summer job programming • Grow our own workforce. Invest in our youth, low income, under-skilled • Older workers bring skills of experience into schools – role models • Enhance workers skillsets in the workplace, build a pipeline, incorporate credential transfers • Fast track credentialing, better understand the differences between countries. Don't reinvent the wheel. • Governor's training initiative – bring that back. Offsets the cost of training • Have GTI reboot also addresses credentialing for migrants • Industry specific training • Recognizing Education in available • Technical schools • State investment in K-12/higher ed • Business/public partnership. Cannot do things alone

Other

- LA is not seen as an economic driver in the state
- Region particularly LA doesn't fit into the state level thinking (south and north)
- Not placing enough value on this area's cultural assets
- Lack of recognition of the successes in the region
- LA/Maine building on assets not dwelling on liabilities – cultural shift
- Drug use
- Lack of attraction to international candidates
- Healthcare availability
- Provincial attitudes/can't do second class feeling
- Employers perception that someone else has to solve problems, develop people
- Education system – perceived and real – family drag on students, homelife
- Immigration policy/process/lottery
- Health care costs
- Service center community funding
- Succession planning not all size businesses – private, single large
- Marketing – we are what we market
- How do we measure the quality of life indicators?
- Balance the cost of living vs higher salaries

Other

- Resources can not focus on rural areas only
- Recognize where LA fits in national trends as differentiated from the state trends
- Create multiple venues for celebrating successes of the region
- Educate local community that LA has tourism and cultural assets
- Improve self image and increasing aspirations by recognizing high level opportunities that are here
- Near term plan, but long term generational shifts are necessary
- Generational shift towards self-acceptance
- Amplifying aspirations
- Utilize outside resources to building affordable healthcare to all
- Support to pay off student loans
- Transition from welfare to work – changes value of assistance less is gained in come
- High energy costs
- Need access to education – educational options are plenty – much with little cost?
- Listen to our youth- ask them for their ideas
- Education and awareness training about diversity
- State provide regional support for regional promotion

Barriers

Solutions

<u>Broadband</u>	<u>Broadband</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of broadband (x4) in rural areas and/or affordable broadband • Maine lacks adequate broadband coverage • Last mile expansion • Broadband- lack of ability to work remotely • Lack of technology, especially in rural areas • Infrastructure issues; cell/internet service poor in rural areas • Lack of good data on broadband makes it hard for businesses to know where to expand. Focus of state is solely on last mile, not getting everyone in the state to a Gig, which is where the state really needs to be. Lack of data and lack of understand what industry needs are for fast, secure broadband is a barrier to growth. • Broadband is the key infrastructure backbone of the 21st century, as roads and rivers were in previous eras. The lack of access to it in Maine hinders not only tech-related businesses, but manufacturers, healthcare, and small businesses. It could be a pathway to higher value-added work in rural areas. • Lack of broadband access in rural communities is restrictive to economic development. Expanding it is not a profitable business endeavor for providers. Subsidies are needed to incentivize reaching the “last mile”. • Technology and the digital market have reduced the personal contact within and across industries/sectors. Lack of business to business networking/partnering/collaboration. Missing opportunities to maximize outputs/outcomes, reduce costs/waste, and increase efficiencies. • Lack of communications infrastructure, especially in rural areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost effective infrastructure: transportation, energy production and distribution (think renewables), broadband. This will highlight the challenges of rural parts of the state in particular. • Improve Broadband coverage so people can live here but work anywhere • Broadband penetration expansion • Broadband (x3) • Increase broadband in all parts of Maine • Explore satellite opportunities for broadband • Invest in, and market, rural quality of life assets such as broadband, and outdoor recreation assets • Better broadband and cellular connectivity

<p><u>Childcare</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Childcare - lack of affordable childcare prevents people from having more kids or getting back in to the workforce (i.e. do you want to work or have kids?) • Lack of early childcare education; children in families with low value of education by a sector of society • Lack of child care options • Not family friendly- daycare is increasingly more difficult to find and when you can it is too expensive for young families to afford • Childcare/eldercare (even pet care) availability, standardization/quality is scarce 	<p><u>Childcare</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage more daycare facilities (public/private partnerships) • Universal daycare and/or a strengthened safety net (universal healthcare, etc.) • Childcare system that encourages parents to use it to go back to school • Accessibility to high quality early childhood education • Phase out social assistance benefits rather than automatically terminating all benefits once the income threshold is reached. Increase funds and eligibility for childcare vouchers and/or open more state run childcare facilities. • With changing demographics Mainers have to not only worry about childcare but also about eldercare while living on paycheck to paycheck. This affects retirement and birth rates in the state.
<p><u>Housing</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affordable housing is a challenge in the midcoast <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Rental market is particularly difficult • Lack of affordable housing near businesses and employment (x2) • Southern Maine (Portland specifically) growth is causing a silo effect of business/employment opportunity without affordable housing nearby (x2) • Housing costs and availability (x4) • Housing as a statewide issue. Insufficient housing stock, excessive real estate/rental prices. Related accessibility issues such as lack of broadband penetration to rural areas. • No inventory of workforce housing (not affordable housing, but just housing to attract people) • Housing- Maine citizens can't afford housing with wages- discourages people from away to consider this a place to live • Need a comprehensive housing plan. Especially for replacement stock. Current housing stock is old, expensive (to maintain or bring up to any current standards), with no specific program to be able to upgrade. A significant issue when trying to attract residents/workers. Need better housing for more than just entry level (new home buyers or low income.) 	<p><u>Housing</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage more workforce housing (public/private partnerships) • Incentivize older home purchases/renovations • Develop more affordable housing options • Educate people that affordable housing which can attract families is needed to support the workforce and grow the population • Develop new housing opportunities – expand workforce housing • A comprehensive housing policy that addresses more than just low income and first time home buyers. The policy should drive affordability/quality/energy efficiency.

- Lack of quality housing stock is a barrier to attract businesses and workers for those businesses. Few people want to buy that old leaky house. Crappy housing directly impacts the quality of the population. Need to build better partnerships between businesses/landlords and communities – affordable AND quality.
- Need workforce housing, housing labor and materials higher. Supply is constrained.

Innovation and entrepreneurship

- Lack of elite private universities in the state limits some R & D opportunities.
 - Some niches of R & D exist already here in Maine, especially at the University of Maine flagship, Jackson Labs, etc.
- How do we get people to think more innovatively? Talking about R & D specifically obscures some larger issues around innovation
- Language of R & D may be limiting, leading to the non-tech sectors to feel excluded from the discussion
- Lack of innovation and not allowing growth
- Maine lacks the infrastructure/coordination/pathway to pull technology out of the R&D that is occurring
- Maine lacks the ability to move R&D work to commercialization, example – University rewards publishing, not producing
- Maine research institutions are not creating large spin off companies
- Investment lag in R&D
- Not utilizing resources in existing businesses- we have industries that don't have the technology to “upcycle” their own knowledge and abilities because they don't necessarily have the capital to invest in the business: example- bioengineering firm was able to come up with other uses of the technology and grow business
- Lack of investment from in industry- this relates to the [above] bullet point, many businesses are risk adverse- and are concerned about investing in their own business without any protection from losing it all
- Low R&D spending (x2)
- Not thinking about the jobs that could be created through innovation

Innovation and entrepreneurship

- Tax credits for the production of intellectual property
 - Incentive for new intellectual property for future developments in products, etc. (commercialization piece of the puzzle)
- Incentives related to innovation measures
 - As businesses translate patents into products
 - More robust tech transfer
 - Funding for patents (patent process is expensive and there are often no budgets in universities/innovation centers for this)
 - Create a collaboration between 10-12 institutions instead of each doing it on their own
 - Accountability for products
- Massive R & D funding (go big or go home)
 - Some impediments from bonding rules
- Hold research institutions that receive state aid to more results, accountability
- Incentivize collaboration between research entities
- Create more fertile ground for tech entrepreneurship
- Innovation funding – need to be bold – move away from small incremental investments. Plan forward for growth and expansion
- Infrastructure for commercialization of innovation
- Create a venue for convening R&D entities – maybe UMaine
- Investment in incubators and labs
- State's R&D capital should be focused on commercialization
- More lab spaces available for R&D

- R&D funding is way behind demand. MTAF had \$45 million to give out but had \$451 million worth of demand. It's not just money for techy startups—it is also big for manufacturers and businesses already established in Maine.
- Maine is one of the worst states in terms of venture capital.
- Preference for silver bullet solutions rather than long term investments in innovation and development.
- Lack of investment in R&D and sustainable manufacturing techniques
- Siloed companies/industries create inefficiencies and waste that could be reduced through innovative collaboration and sustainable development efforts such as co-location and “bolt-on” initiatives that create value added to existing industries/operations. (i.e. building agricultural greenhouses heated by the excess heat generated from manufacturing)
 - A community's identity is often tied to the historical local industry. This contributes to a resistance to change.
 - Lacking productivity both from company and employees. There is no innovation, reward/incentive, upward mobility and risk taking from companies. On the employees' side there is no risk-taking behavior, adequate education and skills.
 - There are many very small/micro business in the area; they may want to grow, but they spend so much time running the business they do not have the capacity for figuring out how to expand
 - Trying to run a business in Maine is lonely need more support and mentorships
 - Maine lacks an adequate amount of investment capital
 - Many Maine start ups don't want to grow past the one man phase
 - Maine lacks recruitment of new companies to Maine
 - Maine private sector investment is lacking
 - Inability for smaller businesses to play a role due to lack of resources/awareness
 - Businesses need to be an employer of choice – business not changing to attract people: not creating incentives to attract people young or old – slow to change
 - Lack of investment from large banking industry- it's not a necessity for large corporations to move here, but it is necessary to attract them to Maine to invest in our existing businesses to help promote growth

- Breaking down of geographic silos
 - Embrace partnership with the Boston to Portland corridor for workers and employers which should make Maine more accessible through aligning programs, R&D opportunities, “campus” or satellite off-shoots up and down the corridor (i.e., reach outside the state)
- Greater bond funding for R&D (more than what has been proposed for 2019). The funding should also be geographically dispersed around the state.
- Grow public-private partnerships. Using matching funds and leveraging federal, state, and private money. (Maine Manufacturing Extension Partnership is an example)
- Positioning Maine for future technology and trends.
- Continued and increased investment in R&D within both industry & the university system.
- Universities should seek out grant funding specifically designed for collaborative projects.
- Encourage cross industry collaboration, circular economy efforts, co-location and “bolt-on” development – creating added value by adding to/building on/utilizing existing industry infrastructure/process/waste. “One man's waste is another man's treasure”
- Share our wins and opportunities across the state. Identify “small success stories” in innovation, community development, economic expansion. Celebrate/promote them and support/encourage replication in other parts of the state.
- Develop and support energy efficient program as it saves business from high energy costs
- Tax credit for seed capital
- Support the sectors that we rely on even if not directly related to other industries (quality of life issues, e.g. support of farms/outdoor recreation)
- Cooperatives as a mechanism for self-investment (e.g. solar farms, where individuals can band together to do a larger development)
- Increase visibility of entrepreneur support and resources: (FAME, MTI, MVF, CEI, SBDC...)
- Expand connections with students to the entrepreneurship resources

- Cost of doing business (x2) - it is a struggle for business to stay competitive in Maine since the cost of business is high- too often, it is cheaper to do it somewhere else
- Closing large industry hurt smaller businesses- an example of the downeast correctional facility closing hurt other businesses in the area that relied on them to sustain their smaller business
- Small businesses not having ability to offer higher wage
- No transition plan (succession planning) for smaller businesses
- Small business are not able to grow
- Traditions (for instance, stores that close at 5pm or on Sundays)
- Lack of entrepreneurial know-how
- Some businesses are "lifestyle" businesses where people don't want to grow beyond a certain point
- Lack of financial incentives for entrepreneurs
- Low profitability of many businesses means low wages for workers
- Insufficient high value-added businesses
- Lack of incentives, especially in rural areas
- Lack of grants/capital for entrepreneurs
- Access to capital – community development focus is increasing, which is good; however small venture capital pool overall
- Private equity has grown, but moved to more mature companies, therefore if you need to raise less than \$500K there is nothing left for small business pipelines and entrepreneurial growth
- Small business investment isn't immediate ROI (like large business), so investors move away from it.
- “Business risk shouldn't be policy risk” – need stable business operating environment – volatility has led to decrease perception of ROI
 - Capital investment to grow or expand is limited, which is a disincentive for businesses to commit to that investment
 - Maine's small business base (145,000 businesses with fewer than 5 people each) is spread across a large geography

- Create value-added economy: Attract companies from bigger cities. Market Maine to more desirable companies
- Growing Business- what did silicon valley do to attract business? Can we do something similar to attract business (this would require additional research and data)
- Portland Model of Niche businesses
- Continuum of financial means to help start up business – investment banking industry- (and people to show how to do this (mentor) entrepreneurs to help them get started. While there are classes for this in the university system, the class does not cover all they would need to know, and it isn't something that is accessible to some people.
- Educate the community on investing in their own business- may help them be less risk adverse- they will need to feel the economy is stable to get this to work
- [Boston immersion program – Richi Foundation](#) – bring companies to Boston for 3 weeks
- Access to capital – targeted bond funding for mid-size investment, then move to a “state seed fund” funded by bonding for small start up (under \$500K); make sure to tie participation to existing initiatives/support programs
- Build a much better understanding at the community level of the tools and incentives (and decision making processes) business/industry need and can use.
- Strategic collaboration between the Climate Council and the business sector.
- Actively work to recruit companies to locate their headquarters in Maine.
- Keep the momentum of start-ups and entrepreneurship
- Do not fight for resources for the same goal, instead work in collaboration
- Encourage business investment
- Take advantage of opportunity zones

Population growth

- Maine needs a better reputation for diversity inclusion > much of this happens via word of mouth > a cluster in Portland area would help attract others
- Too expensive to live in Maine
- Perceived lack of job opportunities
- Better understanding of the Cost of Living
- Many college students leave Maine and don't come back
- Maine appears to lack job options even for Maine job-getters; they cannot see options for their "trailing spouse" to be employed, or for Plan B employment if their first Maine job doesn't pan out
- Maine lacks a culture of inclusivity causing many groups of people feeling left out or unwelcome "not from here"
- Maine lacks competitive recruitment incentives – from Maine's high tax, cost of living and low pay, and more
- Bias/racism
- Young people leaving and not returning due to lack of economic opportunity
- Lack of incentive to stay, or come back if in another state.
- Lack of high paying jobs
- Salary vs cost of living
- Lack of a grass-roots level integration effort for all new Maine arrivals into Portland and/or the state
- "From away" attitude
- "From away" culture barrier manifested in several ways such as lack of credential acknowledgment for people born outside the US, us (true mainers) vs them mentality in the form of bias and/or racism as applicable, general lack of integration around efforts to bring people into Maine and get them where they need to be in terms of jobs or other needed services.
- Attracting people and businesses to Maine
- Workforce shortage inhibits growth
- Some many kids don't want to put in hard labor now – younger generations want to see opportunities in Maine that they perceive

Population growth

- Live + Work in Maine on steroids → expand budget; currently, listing jobs is expensive & tough for smaller industries
- Comprehensive loan forgiveness program
 - Works as an attractor for students and young workers
- Maine needs to better market its job opportunities both in Maine and outside of Maine
- We need to showcase all that Maine has to offer – work-life balance
- Focus marketing on 24-29 year olds (data shows success)
- Market opportunities to college graduates
- Encourage seniors to stay in the workforce longer
- Market education funding opportunities (loans, grants, tax incentives)
- Create welcoming environment for all
- Build on and expand Maine loan forgiveness programs
- Provide additional or more systematic incentives to move to Maine
- Incentives for companies to expand remote work opportunities
- Better cultural integration, from grass-roots up through to the policy level
- Community-based, integrative welcoming program backed by state resources
- Create a vision for attracting employees from away that includes the trailing spouse and opportunities for the employee and trailing spouse
- Change perceptions about opportunities in Maine
- Retain students
- Workforce attraction - education of employers as to what workforce needs and wants, more progressive/aggressive in offerings to attract people
- Increase the population of the state by making it attractive to young families
- Need the state to market the values of living in rural Maine. Need better marketing for rural Maine
- Market cultural assets of the state and quality of life
- Expand and market the Opportunity Maine program
- Market for residents, not just tourists

<p>exist in other states. “I am more likely to move to MA because I think there is a higher success rate.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Older workforce – create a career cap for younger workers even though we need them. How do we work with strengths of both? • Taxes are a barrier to attracting young people to the state and keeping people here (e.g. tax cap on itemized deduction) • Barrier integrating new arrivals to U.S. in the workforce (credentialing, fed law: asylum seekers) • Lack of marketing of assets in Maine that would attract young workforce • Not a welcoming state-we don’t make it easier for “outsiders” • Point of attraction-we have things people want to see, but nothing that makes them want to stay here • Lack of jobs [outside of Southern] Maine • Perception among young people of better job opportunities out-of-state • Lack of promotion of Maine's high quality of life • Adequate training/integration of New Mainer population; connections to public transportation need here as well • Paying comparable wages for comparable jobs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ We need to acknowledge we are competing with southern New England for highly skilled workers ○ Student debt as it relates to pay-scales – so we lose trained professionals • A lack of population growth restricts potential • State marketing campaigns are only focused on tourism, not everything else (as a place to live, work, invest, do business, etc.) • Maine needs healthier communities. In a literal sense, e.g. with the opioid crisis, but also a more general sense of vibrant places people want to live. • Workers don’t live near each other. It used to be that everyone would live in the area and work at the same few mills, go to the same ball game, go to the same restaurant, etc. But now everyone goes their separate ways after work, commuting to other towns, lessening the sense of community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maine offer a good work/life balance – build the Maine brand <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Focus on the positives, boldness ○ Showcase the good and the opportunities ○ Create storytelling around the Maine brand • Better remote work options • Bring in groups of people – co-working space for people for long-term stay and work visits – almost like artist residencies • Engagement with people who have a connection to Maine • Statewide program for student loan forgiveness • Track people who come to Maine for summer camp and target them at 28 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove as many barriers as possible to having people in the workforce longer, whether state regulations or other things. • Coordination between employers, the state municipalities, and education institutions on retention and growth strategies—both for growing businesses and attracting people. FocusMaine could be a model, except not focused on specific industries. • Recruit families to Maine. When an individual from out of state is getting recruited by someone, find out what field their spouse is in and give them people to call so they can get a job as well. Proactively set both members of the couple up with work, not just the one. • Create a comprehensive marketing plan for attracting and retaining businesses and families in Maine (that is not tourism-specific). Generated and maintained by state, municipal, business, and education organizations, it would acknowledge the strengths of Maine’s different regions, Maine’s quality of life and work-life balance, and the opportunities for doing business and working in Maine. It would be backed up by and highlight policies to improve each of these areas as well (regional economies, work/family policies, and business costs). • Market Maine as a place to live + work as much as a place to vacation to. • Develop Maine as a business entity and strategize on how to recruit and retain families and individuals • Market Maine to the world and promote existing programs such as live and work in Maine
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spouses don't see how they could get a job even if their partner secures one, doubly wasting talent because the recruited worker is hesitant to move and their spouse is not shown opportunities that would work for them. Maine needs to attract families, not just workers. • Medical advancements keep people more productive in the workforce longer, like joint replacements. • We need more educated young people, particularly with technical skills and experience in the state to fill current and future employment needs. Lack necessary incentives to attract the workforce we need from outside the state. • Maine's "brain drain" is an issue that needs to be addressed. But we also need to think about how we are utilizing the young people who do stay, particularly in our rural communities. What opportunities are we creating for them to become productive members of their communities and our state? • Many of Maine's young people leave the state for school or early career opportunities but then look to return in their late 20's early 30's. There are many barriers to reentry such as lack of affordable housing, childcare, low-wages. • How welcoming are our rural communities? How business friendly are they? Do new people and businesses feel connected to their new communities? Do we have the necessary infrastructure/programs in place to help them through this transition? New people/businesses are sometimes met with a "wait and see if they last the winter" and/or "outsider" mentality. • Lack of opportunity and limited social activities encourages brain drain of youth and those with higher levels of education. Entrepreneurs and innovators are leaving the state. Further, existing social life is only in a region (i.e. Cumberland) with limited opportunities • Lack of resources such as education, child care, broadband, public transport and housing discourages startups and workforce to move to the state. • New Mainers do not feel invited • Marketing for changing external perceptions → needs to have internal support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternative state brand other than Vacationland. Market to ourselves as well as outside. • Change the tax structure to encourage older residents to stay in Maine. • Attract immigrant families from Boston by developing and marketing the best ESL program in New England • Untapped worker populations: corrections, rehab, retirees, immigrants, unemployed/ underemployed • Create scholarships for researchers to stay in Maine • H1 visa holders: take care of spouses and families so that they can stay in Maine

Regulatory Environment

- Acceptation/perception of change in the midcoast
- Discussions of things that would lead to change are faced with barriers (e.g. people say they want economic development, but when a proposal is made that would increase economic activity, people come up with many reasons why it wouldn't be good ala NIMBY)
- Taxes are too high
- Too many bills create unpredictability in the success of the State
- Businesses don't know if incentives will be impacted or regulations changed – things put on hold!
- Citizens don't know if taxes will be changed
- Small lobbying groups tend to have a large impact
- Delays in decision making by the private sector due to lengthy legislative sessions
- Rapid Increase in the Minimum Wage hurting Maine's small businesses
- Increases the "cost of doing business"
- Impacts wages in other positions
- Affects availability of funding for benefits
- Maine lacks consistency of policies for businesses over time or between industries
- Income tax bracket changes proposed by referendum (e.g. the proposed 3% increase income tax to support education) hinders ability to attract business to the state
- Lack of regionalization (e.g. schools, fire, public safety); lack of town cooperation/collaboration for efficiencies
- Tax to income ratio- lowering income tax will help people spend and invest in their own business. Raising sales tax will tax those who choose to use or buy products... the ratio needs to be better balanced
- Forster an environment of what can we help you with rather than being so regulatory
- The legislature is unwieldy and unstable (too many legislators and too many bills), which creates an unstable regulatory environment
- Local governments are also unwieldy (and there are too many of them)
- Taxes and cost of doing business

Regulatory Environment

- Need stable and reliable funding in general
- Regulatory reform balanced with environmental sustainability
 - Streamlined permitting – make the process faster, easier, more predictable
 - Toolkit for specific industry regulations
 - What do we do about federal rules?
- Governance must become more regional, from both the municipal and state perspectives. Deploying efficiency, growth, conservation, and land use priorities are most successful when coordinated regionally.
- Legislative bills and regulations should follow "State Vision – Road Map"
 - Better vetting of bills
 - Only allow bills that contribute to the betterment of the State
 - Create stability
 - Limit legislative sessions
- Offer incentives to small businesses
- Include legislators in "solution-creation"
- State government being willing to disrupt local control in the public's interest if appropriate (zoning restrictions, multi-unit housing quotas, etc.)
- Regulatory changes and streamlining
- Cost regulation, possibly in the form of a minimum wage increase
- Incentivize local food consumption by instituting quota policy for all state institutions requiring them to purchase a certain percentage of food locally sourced
- Competitive bidding/evaluation program in the industries with a lot of outside investor interest such as aquaculture, "shark tank" style, with a public judging component. (What does your investment/company bring to Maine and do for Mainers?) Selectee gets the contract or some sort of incentive as applicable, everyone gets marketed
- Bring minimum wage down – some youth feel that it flattens wage scale and provides little room for growth.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources are too scattered; no one-stop shop for businesses • Regulatory process • Tax structure • Local opposition to new ventures, different ideas, outsiders bringing types of companies that are also different • State wide programs do not necessarily effect the regional issues. How can these be nimble enough to affect the local infrastructure for issues that are very different across regions. • Can we have different scales and nimbleness of investment that can address the needs of different areas of the state. State strategies and programs are usually one size fits most. • Rules vary jurisdiction to jurisdiction, need to build the capacity of local officials charged with making these decisions and help them develop the tools and capacity to lead on local issues. Consistency. • Taxes can discourage high-earners from wanting to move to Maine • Maine is one of the least-funded states in terms of incentives • There really is a separation between rural and urban areas in Maine (and that split might be between communities on 95 and not on 95, not just North/South), and a lot of the policymaking is driven from the Portland area. • Taxing higher incomes a disincentive to in-migration of professionals • Inconsistencies in state and local laws/regulations are a barrier to industry growth and development. Our preference for local control can stunt regional partnerships & statewide consistency crucial to economic development and industry growth. • While preserving the environment is important, it is also important to come to a balance. For example, in Finland for every tree you cut down you must plant two as opposed to Maine where you have to plant four. • NIMBY culture • Regulatory uncertainty and inconsistencies, slow regulatory outcomes • No statewide economic development strategy • No comprehensive rural development strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regionalization for lower taxes and efficiencies • Need to become a right to work state • Reduce taxes • Remove tax incentive to spend 6 months + 1 day someplace else • “all development is local” – need to address the community apathy and engagement as part of any idea • Leadership committed to a long term plan to institutionalize out volatility <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Term limits; limit referendums; create an executive council that overlaps gubernatorial terms (similar to New Hampshire structure) • Encouraging regional collaboration with incentives; allow “county government” to have more role/power; find opportunities to support good collaborative models • Many good programs that need to be stacked and aligned to target industry growth/infrastructure investment. Solutions should be looked at for more than just one industry. • Persistent, consistent leadership by the administration and legislature. This planning process could itself be an established commission with public, private, etc. members that keep it ongoing. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Economic Growth Council could provide that persistence. They could at least be charged with evaluating the progress of the plan. ○ The Governor needs to drive the process. • Benchmark business costs (energy, healthcare, etc.) versus other states and then set specific goals for reducing them. • Creating a one-stop shop for growing businesses with questions or needs—a hotline for help and attention. Maine is pretty good at this for new, small businesses but could be better for established businesses that need help growing. • Incentivize collaboration by incorporating this into the evaluation process for government contracts (higher rating for more collaborative projects). • Work to address some of the inconsistencies in local laws and regulations moving towards a more regionalized approach.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support and maintain business friendly policies & practices. Stability is key. Term limits have led to a loss institutional knowledge and an increase in special interest bills that are pushed through by lawmakers in hopes of “making their mark” before they term out. • Support economic development for the whole state (like the base closure/redevelopment initiative). Keeping character of local communities but shift towards a more regional approach (hub and spoke development). Pulling communities together to compete against out of state industries. But also tie regional and statewide economic development back to main street. How will these initiatives impact residents at the local level? The plan must move the needle on all three fronts. • Reduce the size of the legislature • Address the referendum process • Mandate zero-based budgeting every 4 years • Need state policy to streamline permitting • Need to become less risk averse in terms of investment → need a 10-year funding plan with 10-year economic plan. • Regionalization of local efforts • Create an office dedicated to applying for Federal grants. • Public-private partnerships since Maine is relatively decentralized • Robust local implementation. Metric-driven • Position the state as a leader in rural development. Own the development of the model. Look at other states dealing with the same issue. Rural innovation model. • Focused economic development plan • Have a state economic development strategy • Expand Maine’s vision by creating an exchange program with other states to understand new ideas, investment strategies, understand data regarding what attracts/deters business • Set up an ambassador system for economic development. State, federal, and local.

Traded Sectors

- Locally produced food that could be consumed by those with low incomes is too expensive at the price farmers need to sell it for.
- Competition with big box stores drives down prices, making it hard for farmers to sell at higher prices.
- Shift towards the service sector in the midcoast away from manufacturing, which has barriers from costs, infrastructure, regulations
- Trade: how do we keep this from shrinking? Infrastructure is a barrier
- Lack of knowledge around exporting products
- Tariffs are having an impact in many industries
- Maine lacks a sizeable proportion of tech-based business
- The value added per job is a function of the industry mix driven by the decline in manufacturing. Growth seems to be in labor intensive sectors.
- Lack of experience with value-added businesses
- Underdeveloped tourism economy (meaning we could be getting more out of each visitor)
- Tourism product development (to increase visitor spending without increasing number of tourists)
- Better market Maine products to tourists while they are here (and when they return home)
- Lack of a sector strategy
- Energy costs are a particular burden for manufacturers like pulp and paper mills
- Processing raw materials (eg, agricultural) missing
- Over reliance on historical output and production methods. Resistance to broadening/modernizing industries, developing new products, and advancing production methods/techniques.
- Benign neglect of our traditional industries. Taking a reactionary approach to sustaining industry. Responding to crises when they arise rather than being proactive, forward looking and innovative.
- Little consideration is given to scalability. i.e. Maine is positioned to be a hub for food production due to climate change. Investments need to be made in the growth of the agriculture industry (scale/science/technology) in order to take advantage of this demand. Yet most of the current growth in this industry is small subsistence farms generated by young people

Traded Sectors

- Renewable energy manufacturing → is this already a missed opportunity?
- Natural resource sector can and should be a strong, sustainable part of our economy. Strategic investments and coordination of effort are required to incorporate destination tourism with farming, fisheries and forestry and to protect our unique quality places that form the foundation of these things.
- Provide incentives for creation of value added jobs
- Target investment in maker spaces, such as aquaculture and other value added industries
- Promoting new industry, targeting industries with competitive advantage in Maine
- Focusing on Agriculture, Aquaculture, Biopharmacy, Forest products
- Increasing value of end products (tissue instead of pulp)
- Energy production, wind/solar
- Bioeconomy of residual raw materials.
- Workforce growth: bioeconomy, high tech jobs in rural Maine.
- Wage growth: bringing tech into manual industries, like agriculture, to make it more profitable.
- Identifying new technology/methods to modernize or shift old industries could help people transition into new industries/product production
- Recognize what we are “the best” at, invest in expanding and promoting these industries. Be proactive and intentional about building them.
- Identify new and diverse ways to capitalize on our natural resources rather than business as usual.
- Recognize the difference between the tourism industry and the outdoor recreation industry. Work to promote and expand them both.
- Investment in creative economy
- Promote existing manufacturing opportunities and remove stigma associated with it
- Use a Market Basket type approach to marketing Maine’s products (e.g., market specific products in specific cultural niches)

drawn to the social aspects and lifestyle of farming rather than the economic opportunities.

- We pay “lip service” to tourism but we don’t truly take full advantage of this economic opportunity. More investment in “destination development” is needed.
- Rural/Urban divide is exacerbated by the lack of focus on the strengths of rural areas such as bio-economy/timber economy.

- Improve Maine-brand and the volume of marketing it to people, businesses

- Invite Maine chefs to cook with green crab to develop a market for this product
- Expand North Atlantic connections
- A supply chain / economic interconnection map, I.e., the flow of resources and goods around the state, origin to destination
- Marketing Maine brand – quality, honesty
- Develop industry co-ops grouping similar small companies together in order to leverage collective resources and the “Maine brand” in competition with larger national companies/brands.
- Identify multicultural populations within large cities and urban centers in the U.S. as possible markets for Maine goods

Transportation and Infrastructure

- Transportation is difficult in the midcoast with Route 1, many peninsulas, and islands
- Lack of public transportation
- Transportation costs
- Aging facilities-mills, foundation of older family owned businesses are in need of modernization in order to keep up with expectations of consumers.
- Aging infrastructure
- Lack of transportation statewide
- Distribution problems due to distance and poor travel infrastructure
- Public perception for using public transportation (it’s not just for those who can’t afford their own transport – socio-economically depressed) which discourages initiatives to fund/create/use it
 - Patience! Public needs time to get used to the idea.
 - How do we extend public transportation across such a big territory – with so much rural landscape?
- State does not have an understanding of future needs and changes in the economy including impacts on infrastructure and transportation

Transportation and Infrastructure

- Need to invest in and create infrastructure (i.e. “Just do it” instead of talking about how we need it – make a big investment instead of picking away at the edges)
- Move from a gas tax to a mileage tax (or something else)
 - Need to find some different ways to pay/fund for transportation infrastructure
- Develop Marine Highway (Maine Port Authority)
- Develop better logistics support (rail, marine, trucking) to move goods; create better connections east-west
- Public transportation access is limited- we don’t have a great public transportation system making it difficult to move around the state without having a car- younger generation looks for this.
- Convention center in a B2B setting
- Build/improve infrastructure for autonomous vehicles to allow for better job access
- Leverage where we can leverage building infrastructure in densely populated areas
- Invest in MSA’s for infrastructure first, then scale that investment back and select a 2nd round or tier of funding for ever widening circles to get out to rural Maine

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the future trends that we might be missing for industry growth and how does that (will that) impact transportation. (Example, closure of mills changed dramatically the movement of wood from the private network of roads to the public network of roads.) • Need to pay attention to how we connect to the world. Piscataquis bridge is the main transit for all goods coming in and out of Maine. Cannot move stuff around the state, rail, roads. Infrastructure is out of step with a push for a more global (or even regional) economy. • CANNOT FORGET WATER AND SEWER, We have old and expensive to replace basic infrastructure. • Maine’s rail system is not robust, which increases transportation costs since that is the cheapest per-pound shipping method • Gap between rural and more urban areas leads to the question of whether we should invest primarily in service-center communities or look beyond that • Transportation logistics to end-user • Remote/rural production sites make it difficult and expensive to transport goods to market. This cuts into profit margin, discourages growth and is a deterrent to new businesses. • Heavy reliance on trucking to transport goods. Lack of qualified drivers, seasonal roads, deteriorating infrastructure makes this difficult. • Aging infrastructure, lack of capital improvements in buildings, roads, broadband, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build diversity by using existing infrastructure (like university housing during the summer of immigrant/asylum seekers) to support the influx of New Mainers • Are their actions/reward/ shared values that can be applied to infrastructure including extreme weather reliance? • Communities need to better understand their real assets – infrastructure in particular and learn how to use those assets to leverage funding/industry. • Solutions need to include asset planning – ID key infrastructure investments that impact many industries for state support. • Improve revenue sharing so that towns are able to invest in the kind of infrastructure necessary to continue to be (or become) the kind of place people want to live and move to. Without the money, they can’t afford the investments that will keep their community going. • Maine most heavily reliant on oil, need to make electricity more economically competitive. • Expand Efficiency Maine incentives for energy efficiency. • Invest in Portland to make it a much larger urban center than it is. This investment should include integrated transit • Public Works Program to address infrastructure issues
<p><u>Workforce Development</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the midcoast, the closest community college is considerably inland and the Rockland University branch is limited, making further education for the workforce difficult. • Way to improve the large numbers of lower wage jobs (e.g. call centers)? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Need to do a better job of building a pipeline • Perception issues → lack of opportunities, push for four-year college instead of industry training • Lack of business training programs/ job training/trade training • Not enough employees who have a background in IT & trades 	<p><u>Workforce Development</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maine Quality Centers → industry specific training from community colleges <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Investment from Yamaha and SMCC to create outboard motor technician training specifically tailored for the industry ○ Expand further ○ State funding, collaboration with industry and education ○ Recruitment from school and from industry • Mentors/internships/apprenticeships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Helps to build the workforce pipeline

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A lot of jobs are not allowing for growth within the company • Unskilled Workforce • Low workforce participation rates • Higher aspirations need to grow with the youth of Maine, such as needing to shed the idea of shipping fish with heads • Many Maine people retain a negative association with manufacturing jobs • Some Maine people say negative deprecating statements such as – “a pretty good salary for Maine” • Maine lacks a positive human capital/demographic outlook, ages, diversity, advanced degrees • Maine lacks enough credentialed trades people • Many People inside and outside Maine do not know about current and future good job opportunities • Supply (employers) and demand (Maine education institutions) are not aligned, especially when it comes to tech skill alignment • Credential acknowledgement for Non-US migrants / no system to adequately meet their needs • Need for training/education • English training insufficient, not integrated enough with the job pipeline, other necessities • Human Capital • Lack of education opportunities for advanced degrees • Lack of (paid) internships for all student levels • Lack of a pipeline for people to funnel into blue collar jobs such as the trades • Resource distribution in the form of education in general, or resources for education (i.e., property tax revenue) as an equity issue. Leads to less good schools in poorer areas, which perpetuates brain drain and moving to the Portland area. • An aging workforce – may be less attractive to employers looking for hardworking productive people with new knowledge. • Equitably investing in Maine youth – different sets of investments being made in children depending on the community. No investment in some portions of Maine. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Use knowledge of experienced and aging population • University system partnerships with business so juniors/seniors work part time in some type of business to help build skill sets <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Helps with perception issues of students (that there are no jobs) • Maybe even begin connecting with high schools? • Helping immigrants & other underemployed workers to engage in apprenticeships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How to overcome politics? • Increase the job training pathways to a career in partnership with Adult-Ed, CTE’s etc. • Increase accessible specialized training/education to meet tomorrows jobs • Incentivize additional education/degrees to meet specialized needs • Companies invest in workforce training • Solve drug issue • Encourage working at an earlier age • Engage K-12 education and make them aware workforce opportunities • Ensure relevant education is provided at universities/colleges to meet demands of industry • Increase apprenticeship opportunities • Reduce post-secondary cost • Provide low/no cost credentialing • Provide easier pathways for credentialing • Provide easier path for already credentialed employees to be employed • Create a sea-change for perspective on what Maine can do – punch higher than our weight class • Increase higher education completion rates by tackling mental health issues and supporting first generation student’s effort • Increase students global experiences • Increase high school students exposure to Maine career options • Investigate credential recognition – policy solution outcome
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- Androscoggin businesses aren't marketing to younger people in ways that are interesting. Interesting jobs not publicized.
- Education – a lot of jobs want you to have a higher level of education and many people experience barriers to pursuing degrees or credentials (affordability, access, childcare, etc.)
- We need to open minds to different opportunities. Students are not hearing about what's available in Maine – types of jobs, degrees necessary, etc.
- Shrinking labor force – there are young children in state who could grow into workers, but there is not enough equitable investment in developing ALL children. NOT EVERY KID HAS THE SAME OPPORTUNITY.
- Youth – there is a stigma around trades even if they make a lot of money. The message is “You didn't go to college for this, so it must not be a good job”.
- Youth – there is a fear of lifelong college debt.
- Low wages and lack of career opportunities
- College debt
- Lack of quality of education (large class sizes, lower ratio of teacher to child ratios)
 - Low teacher wages
- Low wages for public workers (i.e. police, teachers, etc.)
- Lack of training- limitations to existing training programs; need to change eligibility requirements for programs at the Federal level and need more local control of programs
- Workforce programs are not easily packaged to attract businesses to the state
- Workforce Training- limited resources for training
- Offerings in HS has shrunk considerably
- Technical Education is not as desired
- Not all jobs need 4 year degree programs – discussed how many business (especially in tech industry) are taking kids with potential out of high school and training them as they have better programs than some colleges- they are “growing their own”

- Scaling up the 2 degrees mentoring program of Community Bank to build a mentoring program for all industries state-wide backed by state government efforts
- Funded internships and/or funded on-the-job training
- Build awareness of the types and availability of jobs in Maine, by location
- Educate youth on everything happening outside of school – jobs, trades, post-secondary, stigmas
- Education – emphasize the level of proficiency for jobs in Maine (now and in the future). Provide access to the skills and credentials for first job and growth. Promote graduate and post-graduate education to foster more start-ups. Education is the key to the future.
- Miscommunication – Build stronger connections between employers and schools. Build social networks between schools, counselors and employers. (50% of jobs filled by word of mouth)
- Give more training and opportunities to youth while they are still in school. Help them to learn what they want to do, what's available and the necessary skills.
- Education – Mainstream JMG approach (reach ALL of the students)
- Education – trade schools; get rid of stigmas
- Improve equity in public education
- Connecting people with internships
- Change perception of parents re: trade jobs
- Train children to meet the needs of the community
- Add technical education in middle school
- Expand on concept of connecting people with jobs, industries and educational systems. Part time work for juniors and seniors. Changing perceptions. One pathway for working and education.
- Create strategies and implement programs to integrate those with past convictions to the workforce

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Perception of 4 year degree/stigma on non 4-year degrees ● Lack of interest in youth- kids seem to have no interest in work or learning ● Mainers do not have high-wage aspirations/expectations ● Limited educational attainment ● High cost of education ● Low educational attainment ● Education system does not align with job opportunities ● Apprentices and internships ● Qualifications for high-level jobs ● Silos in our state education system ● Educators not connected to needs of employers ● New Mainer credentials need to be fixed ● Low wages ● Lack of re-integration of non-violent offenders ● Less than 50% credential of value in population does not promote business investment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Also don't encourage "trades" training/participation starting in secondary school ○ How do we jumpstart educational aspiration/career pathways? Needs a local champion which is often missing – connects back to the local apathy & oppositional mindset ● Resistance to change and/or aspirational levels ● Low workforce availability is a real problem in rural areas. There are sawmills that couldn't take more orders despite demand because they couldn't get enough workers. ● People can't invest in tech initiatives because the workforce isn't prepared to utilize them. ● Very fractured higher-ed system in Maine. The Lewiston-Auburn area could be the higher-ed center of the state given all of the different types of institutions there, but they don't work together, which is indicative of the entire state. Private schools, UMS, MCCS, etc. don't coordinate. Relatedly, UMS and MCCS is well 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Build infrastructure for training- there are currently workforce training business and workforce training in colleges across the state, make more partnerships with these resources, connect the needs of the business with the resources to train the workforce- this could be an opportunity for the public and private sector to have more partnerships ● Statewide apprenticeship programs (HS)- matching students with business needs ● Keeping workforce healthy- mentally healthy as well as physically healthy, must keep this issue in the forefront of our minds, as this will continue to impact our available workforce- we must have mentally stable people to make all efforts successful. ● "Jails to Jobs" training to reduce recidivism ● Clarify and streamline the process for getting professional licenses and credentials, especially for new Mainers (too many onerous, unnecessary requirements create barriers) ● Build and market better career pathways for PK-adult ● Align education system with job opportunities ● School alignment on skill development ● Give money to companies to train employees ● Higher-margin companies are more able to give better pay ● Improve education levels ● Invest in offseason and year-round employment ● Community college system should work more closely with employers to educate students directly for jobs based on their needs ● Better utilization of CTEs ● Bring seniors back into workforce by offering tax credit for reentry or volunteering ● Highlight industries and show opportunities ● Workforce continuum – key focus industries and outline all needed jobs ● Being oldest state in the nation isn't all bad ● Adult education – better English as a second language programs
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represented in/connected to the legislature, but not all the other schools.

- Educate Maine tried a council of college presidents at some point, but it didn't stick.

- Immigrants come to Maine with credentials from their home country, but they can't translate that into a credential here.
- The idea of stacking credentials over a lifetime isn't given adequate support. There is a lot of focus on the traditional 4-year college path, but less on the idea of building credentials over the course of a career.
- Aspirations of Maine students are often too low. Many, especially in rural areas, choose lower-paying jobs because they don't know that higher-paying options are actually open to them.
- Drug & Alcohol Addiction/Substance Use Disorder is a major challenge for industry employers. Potential employees can't pass drug tests, have suspended licenses and have red flags in background checks that prevent them from filling needed positions.
- There is a generational gap in social and professional skills. Many young people entering the workforce lack basic workplace skills and struggle with teamwork, critical thinking, communication, time management and accountability. Companies don't have the financial or personnel capacity to train new hires in these critical skills.
- We need to invest in and modernize education in our state. Not just the community colleges and the university system but pre-K-12 as well.
- Current workforce development initiatives are too broad/vague.
- Maine's community colleges are a great resource, but each campus does things differently. There needs to be some statewide standardization while still allowing the flexibility required to meet the needs of their local workforce.
- Lack of available workforce in both northern and southern regions of the state discourages expansion
- Reverse causation between workforce and existing industry mix results in a never-ending loop of inability to improve either
- Disconnect between the needs of the company and supply of employees.

- Promote trades in schools
 - Student assessment or evaluative process to attract to trades
 - for educational support providers - messaging about positive trends in working in trades
 - Aspiration & availability of apprenticeships needs to be developed
 - Incentivize businesses who use apprentices
- Transparent data! "glass door" for company wages in similar industries to hold employers accountable & give employees information to hold employers accountable
 - Adjusted for COLA depending on location
- A robust, sincere request from the governor (and it must be the governor) to bring leaders of higher-ed institutions together. It could be a similar structure to the Forest Industry Advisory Council.
- Increasing unionization
- Better rules around paid family leave, sick days, etc. as part of a larger goal of improving conditions for dual-income families, ensuring better work-life balance and improved conditions for child care and elder care.
- Improving and expanding apprenticeship programs in the trades.
- Establish a traveling roadshow of employers that go around to different high schools and show the type of (good, high-paying) jobs that are available right here in Maine. To help show students that they can go for higher-paying careers and to help dispel perception of students that Maine doesn't have good opportunities.
- More trade schools, apprenticeships, skills pipeline.
- Leadership inspiring confidence, changing attitudes. Give people something to be positive about.
- Expand summer internship opportunities in Maine.
- Expand STEM deeper into public schools down to the middle school level. Nurture student awareness of the sciences at an earlier level.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural practices and beliefs hinder workforce growth. For example, families and students associate the following with stigma: community college education, trade schools & technical trainings • Gap in education and lower education attainment. • K-12 program do not introduce hands on education or examples of jobs early on. Therefore, individuals cannot imagine what a college education might do for them. • Due to the lack of industry there is an exploitation of workers. Lack of options limits employees’ ability to negotiate or move jobs. To find new opportunities individuals, have to uproot their families and completely move to a difference state. Therefore, the lack of competition due to limited options keeps the median wage growth suppressed • Limited programs/resources for continued education and for those wanting to switch careers. • Prison population is not adequately integrated into the community and/or leveraged • Lack of training or resources for first generation college students • Lack of seamless certification for immigrants • Aspirations of Maine students are often too low. Many, especially in rural areas, choose lower-paying jobs because they don’t know that higher-paying options are actually open to them. • High levels of social assistance benefits prevent people from “showing up to work”. People are disincentivized to take jobs and lose their benefits when their earnings may not match their benefits and/or cover their expenses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find ways to integrate education with industry creating opportunities for innovation and workforce development. • Emphasize on the availability of opportunities through trade schools at a younger age and persuade to change cultural attitude around trade schools. • Develop condensed education program that fits the needs of working professionals • Develop and promote trade schools • Provide mentorship/guidance for first generation students • Education reform: introduce stem tracks to high schools; strengthen university and business partnership; develop a competitive mindset; create a vision of employment and high school and college; job training/ job exposure early on in high school or college • Develop strong math and science skills in high school. Learn from our own school example: Limestone • Project based multi-disciplinary education and allow exposure to soft skills. Develop muscle memory (hands on project) as opposed to memorization • Develop aspiration and create options/opportunities • All employees everywhere can get LEAN training to increase their productivity • Encourage certifications rather than degrees – or even badges, which are microcredentials, which are easier for young people to obtain than certificates or degrees
<p>Other</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maine as vacationland • Healthcare cost is too high • Heating cost too high • Maine lacks coordination of institutional silos – colleges vs. employers vs. government vs. housing, etc. • Healthcare costs • Lack of an integrated approach, too many piecemeal efforts 	<p>Other</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bipartisan campaigning on common ground (whatever that common ground might be) • Internal focus: remind people that we can work together in Maine • Develop a set of agreed upon metrics & accountability that goes with them • Market/capitalize on good news • We need cheerleaders

- Lack of basics in rural areas such as broadband and diverse food selection
- Poverty
- There is a huge gap in what success looks like in a rural versus urban community. We do not have models for rural innovation. This state could be a real leader in that. What's working in rural communities? What are the patterns of success? What can be learned? Rural – what are the sacrifices that must be made for ALL Mainers to succeed?
- Opioid addiction- costs and drag on the economy; loss of workforce, broad issue. Jails are supported by property taxes and addiction leads to increase cost
- Public sector work is no longer attractive- not competitive, benefits are not as good as they once were
- Weather- while not something we can solve, we could learn to be more flexible- instead of completely shutting down due to rain (with something like a farmers market) how could we adapt?
- Emotional issues are growing in youth- this must be recognized and be considered an immediate need to address- growing anxiety in younger generation will carry into our workforce, if we don't recognize this issue now, we will be dealing with a new set of issues when they enter our workforce. Lack of engagement, limited communication skills, ability to cope... ask any educator about this, they will confirm the issue.
- Competition from Amazon
- Mental health issues
- Two (or more) Maines - rural/urban and north/south
- Some social benefits are too high and, in fact, discourage work
- Mental health issues
- Attitude
- We are our own worst enemy—we always share negative perception
- Geography and the “2 Maines”
- Healthcare is huge. Employers and workers surprised and discouraged to find out how expensive healthcare is in Maine compared to other states. It eats into their budget significantly,

- Public utility rates → find a way to drop prices and diversify the energy sources
- Plan for the future with appropriate resources to address aging infrastructure
- Explore using the UN sustainable development goals framework
- Addressing “Two/Many Maines” perception where people identify more with a region or town than the state as a whole
- Focused solutions/ divorce as much as possible from politics
- Invest for the highest impact versus diluting the investment. (but...impact on equity)
- Utilize existing resources
- Adjust social benefits to encourage work
- Be able to have cross-functional ownership of resources; tracking and execution
- Have resources to navigate to appropriate options – how to find resources
- Have common goals
- Bias for positive press about our economy

sapping money from other areas (whether wages, investment, or profit). It is even worse in certain counties, with Medicare having a higher premium for specific counties, for example.

- Rural Maine doesn't have the density that the knowledge economy rewards.
- Maine doesn't sufficiently acknowledge and leverage its strengths as a state and the strengths of different parts of the state. Specific businesses are good for specific regions.
- Generational poverty is only getting worse.
- There is a gap between productivity and wage growth. Productivity has grown while wages have stayed flat. This has contributed to many people feeling less motivated by/hopeful about the economy. Fewer people see the potential for achieving a middle-class life for solid, steady work in the current economy.
- Unreasonable expectations of how to balance work and family. On-call work has been expanding, work schedules are becoming less certain, and so on. All of this contributes to burnout.
- Barrier to north country: reputation about weather
- Cultural attitudes: set in our ways, negative outlook.

Barriers

Solutions

<p><u>Broadband</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broadband internet • Broadband (rural) • Lack of broadband • Consider broadband for ME workers in and out of state. 	<p><u>Broadband</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upgrade Broadband and allow remote work • Co-working spaces, broadband deployment, cellphone service • Invite(?) families – broadband improvement • Broadband is needed for remote workers and business growth • Ability to work remotely – broadband, smart grid technology • Northern Maine access – roads, internet • Add more broadband • Infrastructure/broadband • Broadband, high speed fiber • Infrastructure/broadband
<p><u>Childcare</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost of childcare • Childcare • Lack of affordable childcare access • Wages and opportunities for childcare workers • Low wages for workers in caretaking positions 	<p><u>Childcare</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan for working families to afford childcare while paying childcare workers a living wage • Investment in Housing - need affordable childcare centers and investment • Payment for childcare as an attraction tool for younger families – in place/conjunction with student loan payment • Affordable childcare • Longer school days longer school years
<p><u>Housing</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of affordable entry-level housing • Housing and Housing affordability • Affordable housing 	<p><u>Housing</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment in Housing - need affordable childcare centers and investment • Sustainable and affordable housing – energy efficient housing. If we provide housing, it needs to be energy efficient.
<p><u>Innovation and entrepreneurship</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entice new small businesses to have corporate headquarters here • Culture not supporting growth • Need technology environment to grow • Necessary for innovation and growth, need investment \$\$ • Need businesses that can pay higher wages (Not only service jobs) 	<p><u>Innovation and entrepreneurship</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small Companies to band together to purchase plans (also impacts value-added economy) = better <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Pooling resources generally for small business (ie payroll, healthcare) • Provide consistent business opportunities • Allow for growth of businesses which will drive wage growth • Looking for more opportunities similar to Backyard Farms in Madison

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of corporate HQs and R&d • Bringing in smaller businesses • Not many corporate headquarters in Maine • Private R&D would increase • Connect businesses to schools • Lack of financial literacy • Technology • R&D \$\$ • More willing to try ideas or copy good ideas • Anti-development to projects in Maine 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need a 1 stop shop - 1 office from start to finish with all resources available. Including licensing and financing • There should be resources to help people make smart choices for education and career training for future economy • Establish system to inform young people about financial decision making, part of K-12 Education curriculum • All people producing should be trained properly on the best way to produce • Other: Perhaps catering to groups who want to stay small business
<p><u>Population growth</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attracting/retaining young people • Generating excitement about Maine • Population demographics • Mindset of Maine population <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ “what can we do about it” ○ Self image improvement • Keep students in Maine after graduation • Lose young people after they graduate from college • Attract new Mainers • Declining population • Allure of large cities • Mentality of nothing in Maine • Marketing – Maine and Products • Perception of ME • College grads leaving • Partners/families finding work • Supporting international workers and families • Low population/aging population • Out migration • Cultural conservation 	<p><u>Population growth</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better Maine lifestyle marketing – family support system • Help make Maine attractive for trailing spouses • Market “The Way Life Should Be” • Bangor has changed and is still changing – let people know it’s not the same as it was • Marketing!!! • Be more welcoming to those from away • Better programs to encourage graduates to stay • Better programs to train immigrants so they have opportunities in available jobs • Incentives to keep students in Maine – need to have commitment(?) from students to stay in Maine for 5 years if you received free education • Promote lifestyle • Better Marketing • Welcome centers- increased resources • Immigration reform – understanding that we can’t birth our way out of population numbers • As a state, we need to be more welcoming. • Marketing • Policies to support spouses and funding needed to support retention • If ME workers move out of state, continue to support them when they live elsewhere • Marketing “Maine” to those young families who would be attracted to lifestyle • Embrace immigration

<p><u>Regulatory Environment</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost of doing business is high (taxes) • Politics – depends on what politicians want to support • Fees (car registration) taxes high • Constant changes to regulatory environment out of Augusta – changing playing field • Provisions in law that inhibit business growth • Taxes • Red tape and regulations • Cost of doing business – constantly raising taxes. Mandatory PTO • Regulations – hinder businesses from starting up • Concerns used as an excuse to slow development (see Nordic aquafarms in Belfast) • High cost of business • OT bill pending • Paid family leave bill pending • How to keep 10-year plan viable over different administration 	<p><u>Regulatory Environment</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zones in areas in off season. Give tax break to businesses during this time. • Tax incentives for businesses • Utah- no home tax for veterans • Lower taxes • Legislature review to revisit bills just past effecting business \$\$ • Lower business taxes • Corporate tax burden is high • Work with feds to streamline process • Change in regulatory structure, public input • Reduce regulatory burden/taxes • Watch/review taxes on businesses to entice to businesses • Incentives for qualifying builds, private/public partnerships • Elections and continuity • Tax credit for employers offering tuition assistance, to encourage private programs within employers.
<p><u>Traded Sectors</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourist areas to work to grow business in offseason with a different type of business (provide year round employment for all) • Support year round economy in targeted areas • Many seasonal/PT workers • We’ve lost high paying and high benefit industries i.e. paper mills • Resistance to Industry growth often from new comers and out of state interest 	<p><u>Traded Sectors</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blanket state policy improvement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Don’t focus on regions, let capital deploy where it wants ○ Provide incentives • Coastal towns/other rural towns close down in fall • Incentivize new companies to revitalize large mfg facilities • Drive tourism to include interior of state • Increase global reach for Maine products • Making seasonal work more year round • Change of mindset from manufacturing to service industry • Sugarloaf has greatly increased summer traffic. How can Bar Harbor expand their season?

<p><u>Transportation and Infrastructure</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural nature of the state and associated transportation challenges • TRANSPORTATION limitations • Distance (rural) • Deteriorating town centers • Plan new schools around that future need – air conditioning • Lack of transportation • Built environment – downtowns • Transportation – East/West highway 	<p><u>Transportation and Infrastructure</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of transit system or multiple systems to all areas of the state • East/west highway to work with Canada • Transportation • Upgrade Infrastructure • Revitalize downtowns and use existing and historic buildings
<p><u>Workforce Development</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication of opportunities • Lack of skilled tradespeople – enrollment in CTE is flat • Do not have statewide strategic education plan • No plan for what the future jobs will be • Working people are focused on surviving – can’t plan for future economy. They are commuting long distances to work low wage jobs • Insufficient education and acceptance of good job opportunities, particularly in trades • Lack of skilled workers, opportunity, lack of knowledge of opportunities for skilled training; lack of training opportunities • Loss of services when enter into the workforce • Job hunting service, centralized job search hub <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Communication improvements around job availability • Lack of trades • Trainings and Technology • Too much competition – increasing opportunities • Educational investment, student loan debt, degree and certificate attainment for work readiness • Working below skillset, underemployed • Cost of education 	<p><u>Workforce Development</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incentivizing firms to provide internships/apprenticeships for students • Clearinghouse/consistent process for communicating opportunities to those searching • Regional clearinghouses should work together to cross-pollinate and network • More education in skilled labor • Promote entry into trade programs • PreK-12 at least – strategic plan • Coordination between higher ed programs/career training/adult ed • Community schools – Brewer example community resource clearinghouse • Universities and colleges help point out opportunities during 4 years • Earlier education for children and parents about good-paying skills and trades job opportunities • Employer programs such as paid time off, disability coverage • Post jobs to a centralized location • Utilize community college • Increase wages and benefits • Increase trade education – move back to trade schools from community colleges • Don’t forget about private higher ed institutions when promoting education opportunities in Maine • Enhance education to students of existing programs available to them. Many unaware of opportunity • Retired nurses can teach

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of faculty to teach – nurses make more in private sector than teaching – so who teaches? • Workforce training • Training • Higher ed does not have the ability to connect graduates to ME businesses • Faculty for key staff (Nursing) • Drawing people to area b/c/ lack of jobs • Cost of education • Desperate workforce transition rather than planned • Workforce capability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility to jobs cannot just be “who you know” or we will never attract out-of-staters • Training for immigrants – assisting with workforce prep (financial wellness, understanding system access, building connections) • Opportunity for workforce development zones • Subsidize professors/retired nurses? • Study hiring processes abroad • Foster Umaine trade program • Foster CI(?) mindset program in more schools (rapid review) • More responsive training by schools, up to date with tech • Increase community college trades training • More technical trade encouragement • ME career connect
<p><u>Other</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Succession planning and willing participants • Culture not supporting growth • Silos created rather than overall plan • Delayed Healthcare appointments • Healthcare • Opioid Issue • Cost of Energy • Expensive to live in Maine • Opioid crisis • Cost of healthcare • Time • Sense of place – not wanting change • Business environment and lack of motivation to talk about positive news • Cost of living • Cost of living and energy workforce • Nimbyism- Environmental • High cost of healthcare/insurance 	<p><u>Other</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No more “Vacationland” • Incentive to locate to rural area • Inter-state reciprocity – easier for us to work across state lines • Increase Exports • Maine is very networked focus • Efficiency • Funding support to the barriers listed

Barriers

Solutions

<p><u>Broadband</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of broadband 	<p><u>Broadband</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broadband public and private partnerships • Increase broadband
<p><u>Childcare</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Childcare affordability • Childcare 	
<p><u>Housing</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Type of housing young people are looking for • High costs that keep people from moving here • Expensive for families to live • Cost of living • Housing stick throughout • Affordable workforce housing 	<p><u>Housing</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find a way to attract housing developers • Cost-effective to live and work in Franklin county. • Use a tool to compare cost of living to benchmark what info real people want
<p><u>Population growth</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maine has an aging, slow growing population • Lack of opportunities for young people • Young people’s connectedness to community • Businesses that tailor to young people • Baby boomers staying in jobs 	<p><u>Population growth</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Way to keep UMF students in Franklin county • Immigration
<p><u>Regulatory environment</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High taxes and cost of doing business • Taxes- income taxes • Regulations- permitting mostly DEP permitting and local planning • State storm water law 	<p><u>Regulatory environment</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 500 state storm water law should go right on redevelopment in fall • Lower taxes • Reduce permit timeframes • Reduce energy costs
<p><u>Traded sectors</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expanding UMaine wood products 	

<p><u>Transportation and infrastructure</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transportation: roads in and out of franklin county lots of traffic • Limited public transportation • Transportation for shipping products • Transportation • Western Maine transportation, lack of funding for transport • Drivers license, OUI, transportation 	<p><u>Transportation and infrastructure</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expanding Lewiston green line
<p><u>Workforce development</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relatively low skilled workforce • Our reputation for not being skilled • Slow growing, aging employers and employees • Might take forever to hire an employee • Lack of quality trade professionals • Lack of quality/varied education • Stigma of trades • Lack of school choice< k-12 needs diversity • Funding career and technical schools to expand programing • Same for adult education to act as liaisons for business • Link businesses and UMF • Lower scale of oppourtunities in employment in our area • Seasonal jobs • Education in workforce • Access to vocational training opportunities • Hiring etiquette is poor in Maine • People without perfect resumes get overlooked • Funding cuts for trade education • Student loan debt • Research work share programs 	<p><u>Workforce development</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mt. Blue tech school and trades • Support UMF • Workers comp • Destigmatize trade vocations • Job skills, training into high school curriculum • Better high school connectivity to trade schools • Encourage business to collaborate with schools • Expand career and technical centers • Tuition forgiveness if you live in Maine • Integrate education community with local community • Bring mobile infrastructure to the classroom

Innovation and entrepreneurship

- Seasonal businesses
- Not enough small business loans
- Heavily comprised of small businesses
- Lacking high income, high growth companies

Innovation and entrepreneurship

- Growing the businesses we already have
- Building a system for keeping small businesses going after original owner retires
- Destigmatize marketing
- Business friendly environment
- Talk to the right business
- Model companies like MBNA

Other

- Climate, snow
- Lack of support from public officials
- Harsh winters
- Lack of engaging opportunities
- Economic development not a priority at the legislative level
- Voice of Portland is not the voice of Maine
- Health insurance
- Lack of capital investments
- Climate
- Mainers not achieving full potential, do not feel part of their community
- Geography
- Disconnect between communities and elected officials
- Families that are surviving day to day, challenges to support their children to take advantages of opportunities in school
- Opioid crisis

Other

- Help people who have good ideas make it reality
- Benchmark to other states that are growing
- Benchmarking
- Top of agenda, action oriented
- Look at models in other states
- Programs, increase funding
- Loan forgiveness
- Grant funding

Barriers

Solutions

<p><u>Broadband</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broadband gap • Cost of internet • Digital integrity • Connectivity • Broadband access 	<p><u>Broadband</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality high speed broad band would address numerous barriers – this must be solved by the public sector • Expand broadband • Broadband - digital equity
<p><u>Childcare</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of child care (x5) • Insufficient quality child care • Day care hours 	<p><u>Childcare</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free child care
<p><u>Housing</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zoning for housing/ workforce • Lack of affordable housing • Affordable housing • Cost of new housing • Vacant buildings downtown • Housing affordability/ efficiency • Housing • Rental housing 	<p><u>Housing</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balanced neighborhoods • Build more affordable housing • Down East Community Partners is doing tiny home = low income housing • Year round new Mainers= follow FHA • Mixed use neighborhoods (missingmiddlehousing.com) • Dorms, housing for seniors – connect to universities
<p><u>Innovation and entrepreneurship</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of markets • Small-scale businesses can't afford high wage • Small-scale businesses don't grow, no expansion for labor needs • Small businesses are tapped and can't pay more • Store hours • Lack of public/private partnerships • Investment • Need to increase financial awareness 	<p><u>Innovation and entrepreneurship</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entrepreneurship education • Make rules for creative behaviors instead of penalizing • Inform kids better on opportunities • A new way to develop entrepreneurial skills through a state-wide program • Public/private example: aging center with university and WCCC • Use existing buildings

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aging business owners, lack of exit planning, liquidation and closure (x2) • Need more business innovation • Entrepreneurs • Low number of anchor businesses • Seasonality of businesses • State of Maine does not value flagship research based university (like Dartmouth, Carnegie, Mellon, U of MN) • Investment/innovation • Seasonal/low paying / tourism • Lack of entrepreneurship because of lack of capital, education and cultural issues • Knowledge acquisition issues for entrepreneurs – lack of business acuity • Lack safety net for entrepreneurs • Small business is dependent to larger (business) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Match making organization for building the PPP • Invest in long-term money-generating entities • Incentivize and assist business owners to sell to their workers • Entrepreneurship education needs to be taught at all levels • Incubators/innovation centers • Businesses that can be year round • R2 rating into 1 university system more full force • Youth entrepreneurship – 4H, Junior Achievement • Incentivization • Business incubation/ program acceleration models • Better partnership between private and public sectors and education • More investment in university R&D • Invest in R&D • Business incubators • Partnerships between universities and businesses • Pre-developed sites/work force
<p><u>Population Growth</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of social life, entertainment • Keeping college graduates in state • Aging population (x2) • Lack of immigration • Young people going away • Retirement • Convenience of services • Health services, gym, yoga, etc. • Lack of diversity • Wages • Lack of immigration, generally • Lack of immigration of remote workers 	<p><u>Population Growth</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerted, state-wide effort to recruit immigrants to Maine with skills at all levels • Keep, young, talented people in Maine • Young males not counted as part of the workforce • Immigration • Create full-time, year round jobs

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full good life qualities: entertainment/plays; access to health/wellness; business hours expanded • Premature death rate • Culture impedes young workers – don’t feel included • Skilled immigration 	
<p><u>Regulatory Environment</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasis on the environment • High income tax (x2) • Cost of state licensing • Regulations • High cost taxes/utilities • State regulations/costs (x2) • Sharing information (we don’t) • Culture of self-sufficiency w/o resources – we don’t need gov’t • Continuing beyond 4 years – gov’t = why bother? • Responsiveness of gov’t – slow, can’t get an answer 	<p><u>Regulatory environment</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More favorable tax structure • Get rid of regulations • Increase minimum wage • Cap CEO pay to certain percentage • Break with large corporations • Get rid of frivolous lawsuits • Widely accepted roles and transparency “swipe left” • Analyze state resources and use them wisely • More collaboration on the state level • Get businesses back to the table • Regulation, deregulation, public policy
<p><u>Traded Sectors</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Few large employers • The sectors of where job growth is being created • Innovation – find products for a global market • Lack of markets • Lack of industry • Type of jobs makes it hard to add value • Uneven tourism impact • Lack of economic diversity • Focus on declining vs. growth sectors • Too much extraction, not enough processing • Natural resources are depleted, need to overcome 	<p><u>Traded Sectors</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open up new markets • Investment and regulatory freedom i.e. DMR/Scallops • Create Maine based products • Coordinated, aggressive shoulder season/ 4 season tourism marketing – emphasize cultural not just environmental recreation • Encourage manufacturing where appropriate • Value regional and niche sectors but emphasize investment in growth sectors • Coordinated, sustained tourism marketing • Create new destinations • Look at sector/cluster approach with geographic • Business attraction – connect to tourism, recreation “Play here. Live here.”

<p><u>Transportation and Infrastructure</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transportation (x3) • High price of heating oil and electricity • Road systems • Public transportation • Access – get here, get out of here • Infrastructure • Cost of utilities and building including site work • Infrastructure – roads/ internet • Very bad roads • Infrastructure; downtown revitalization • Good downtown roads 	<p><u>Transportation and Infrastructure</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prescriptions/public transportation • Public transportation • Green energy • Investment in routes that are important to employer and people • 5000' foot runway will change everything • Use state's ability to borrow money to fix infrastructure and collect fees to repay • Van pooling – Rural VT, Washington state, state drivers, county deployed. VT apps that link rides together Go Vermont • Transportation/ infrastructure • Invest in roads
<p><u>Workforce Development</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employee efficiency • Education levels • Employee benefits and family consideration • Lower skilled workforce (x2) • Opioids • Lower education attainment • Structure of hiring people • No growth in unionized workforce • Jobs that require education (2-4 yrs) but don't pay a wage • Low number of kids graduating • Willingness to start at bottom • Gap between needs and skills • Lack of skilled young work force population that is diverse, large and broad-based • A lot of seasonal work • Uneducated workforce • Part-time, seasonal employment • Knowledge 	<p><u>Workforce Development</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employers help with employee expenses. Benefits. • Inform kids better on opportunities • Career pathway explanation • Training • Innovation in higher ed i.e. WCCC • Apprenticeship @ St. Croix WCCC <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Skill based competency ○ National certification ○ Women's center ○ Child care voucher payment center • Education • Training • More accessible, practical skills training, offerings from public sector • Restructure the ME university system into a single, coherent system with specialty campuses around the state with specific skills/ subjects • Education/alignment of programs

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of technical skills • Businesses not willing to invest in workforce • Higher ed – flagship academic institution, doesn't value higher ed, "R2 rating" • No hospitality program • Educated, qualified employees • A prepared/trained workforce • Maine doesn't value higher education • Lack of tech education • Motivation/faith things will happen • Opioids • People work in isolation • Commitment to employees' prof development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entrepreneurship education K-12 • Create opportunities for internships/ apprenticeships/ mentoring • New/expanded tech ed programs • Use old people's skills • Hospitality program and universities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Best practices of Hyatt, Disney, Marriott
<p><u>Other</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthcare costs • Low salary • CEO Wages • Greed (x2) • Lack of elder care • Lack of health care access • Reimbursement rates • State has substantially taken support away • Generational culture • Technology • Weather • Geography • Rural nature • Habit/tradition 	<p><u>Other</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National healthcare for all not tied to employers • Decrease costs • Long-range wisdom • Location • More social programs • Lower acceptable pricing • Explore needs/ demands – what's missing in Maine for goods/services? • Bold Coast vs. over run Acadia • We may not be marketing the right thing • Invest in economic research on Maine

Barriers

Solutions

<p><u>Broadband</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of rural broadband • Infrastructure – broadband access • Slow broadband 	<p><u>Broadband</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural accessibility through transportation and broadband to high paying jobs elsewhere • Invest in broadband – tech colleges • Every Mainer should have access to a gig – work/broadband • Public/private partnership for broadband • Evaluate potential for increasing state sponsored satellite broadband coverage • Connectivity, education awareness by strong internet resources • Fully accessible fiber based network • High speed to community co-working centers
<p><u>Childcare</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of child care • Cost of child care • Lack of affordable daycare 	<p><u>Childcare</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major investment in supporting new parents i.e. quality child care • Reduce restrictions on home-based daycare • Advocate for and work with daycare providers
<p><u>Housing</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of housing • Housing deficit • So. Maine lacking affordable housing • Housing gap • Lack of regional benefits for housing • Lack of affordable workplace housing in urban areas • Boomers and seniors aren't leaving homes 	<p><u>Housing</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding available for small businesses to identify and find needed housing • Lower housing costs through affordable housing bonds – increase family's available dollars • Concentrated affordable housing development –modify zoning and design • Eliminate limits on multi-family housing- decrease in cost • Review housing projects from a regional rather than municipal perspective • More micro housing units
<p><u>Innovation and entrepreneurship</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of entrepreneurship in rural Maine • Lack of entrepreneurship • Need new business and better industry/ business attraction to rural areas • Lack of capital investment 	<p><u>Innovation and entrepreneurship</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public encouragement of entrepreneurship • Entrepreneurship education K-12+ • Promote small business entrepreneurs • Invest in companies that are here and support them • Strategic R&D investment (public/private partnership)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of investment in technology • Needs/wants welcoming innovating spectrum • Resistance to change/ innovation in rural ME • R&D investment • Lack of innovation business innovation • Can't make long-term investments • Lack of R&D investment • Need more R&D • Businesses are small - limited middle management and opps available • Research and development • Access to capital and /or confusing on where to go • Support for commercialization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help investing businesses navigate challenges of entering state, communities • Continue to support Maine businesses via the Maine brand as a lightning rod for drawing attention • More logical/stream-lined access to capital and business support
<p><u>Population Growth</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young adults not having many children because of money • Keeping young people in Maine to work and live • Aging population • Individual incentives to move (personal) • Perceptions – too remove and rural • Decline of rural life • Loss of young people • Better care of Mainers we have – too many lost to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Preventable disability ○ Drug use ○ Adverse childhood events • Perception –not multiple work opps in field (spouse) • Mainer is someone who is here now. One Maine. • Mainers come in all ethnicities, races, creeds, etc. • The “face of Maine” is diverse • Dysfunctional federal gov't position on migration • Goal of growth runs counter to Maine's rural character , sparse population and slower pace • Young immigrants can't find jobs so they are moving toward opps and real diversity 	<p><u>Population Growth</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make Maine the most child-friendly state in the country • Become the most child-friendly state in U.S. • Climate refugee destination • Market “live and work here” not just visit • Bring interns from other states • Connect asylum seekers and new Americans to full range of community • Attract out of state students for grad school • Be welcoming, including immigrants • Market to recruit people to come back to Maine- promote quality of life • Make college in Maine more attractive • Knowledge economy – offer free tuition if maintain a B average in college • Stop using polarizing language us vs. them, out of staters, from away, urban vs. rural • Aggressive approach to attracting immigrants – welcoming culture • Allow for community revitalization and market to young people • Raise bar for passing referendums

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversity not reflected in state gov't workforce • Maine is trying to attract but not giving reasons to stay • Where are the people of color, young people, immigrants who should be at this meeting but aren't? • Diversity requires inclusion • New Mainers need to be included in the process • We are on a college campus but there are no students? • Not welcoming to people from "away" • Hospitality welcomes tourists but not new Mainers • How we treat asylum seekers • Downtowns not attracting people • Lack of diversity • Young/old divide • No incentive for wealthy company owners to personally stay in state • Quality of life not enough and can't afford or find other work opps. • Lack of growth oriented attitude of people and agencies • Aging, slow-growing population • Demographics • Perception that we are not welcoming to people from "away" and not interested in growth • Sprawling out – design growth consistent with the resources we have • Need scholarships for new Mainers • Encourage immigrants, domestic and int'l • Low wages make it unaffordable • AirBnB is where people consider moving to Maine/stay 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attract wealthy population – repurpose money they bring to support economic growth

Regulatory Environment

- Top marginal income tax rule too high
- Welfare cliff
- Top marginal income tax rate
- Local control increases cost
- Concern about property taxes limits investment in infrastructure
- Unpredictable business environment due to current ability to pass referendums
- Plans are not sophisticated or visionary enough to effect change to meet goals
- In TX a sm biz can be established in one day, here it takes weeks/ months
- Local rule vs. regional planning
- Federal programs not innovative/ supportive
- Business licensing process regulations
- High taxes
- DECD treats new business as a nuisance – tries to weed them out
- DECD needs process change, update to be more responsive and grow
- Poor land use is a drain on public resources

Regulatory Environment

- Tax reform
- Phase out welfare cliff
- Create a longer-term budgeting forecast system at state level
- Better regional land use and government
- Raise gas tax
- Reduce “local control” ethics
- State level reciprocity agreements
- Create a long term budget that shows the savings Maine will realize by stead investment in children and their emotional health
- Make sure municipalities are sure they want growth before creating TIF districts
- Coordination and collaboration of econ. develop. entities/orgs.
- Respect regional differences but move to regional planning
- Streamline regulations – reduce number of agencies involved
- Encourage use of all ED tools including TIF at local level
- Better coordination between DECD and tourism office
- More efficient land use planning, allow density in town centers
- Tax incentive for economic development
- Increase sales tax/ reduce income tax
- Allow for change in law
- Land use

Traded Sectors

- Press needs to address lobster/commercial fishing.
- Diversity of industries
- No mention of lobstering/fishing

Traded Sectors

- Collaboration between industries – biotech, agriculture, hospitality, aquaculture
- ID target sectors – select a max number to assure success and focus
- Investment in R&D and strategy for commercialization in growth industries
- Leverage North Atlantic trade
- Build on Maine as hub for North Atlantic trade
- Encourage clusters

Transportation and Infrastructure

- Lack of transportation to jobs
- Distance and lack of public transportation
- Inadequate transportation
- Lack of public transportation/ traffic
- Transportation esp in rural places
- Transportation infrastructure in general
- Transportation infrastructure
- Transit adequacy
- Lack of energy efficiency and renewable energy
- Crumbling infrastructure
- Lack of high tech infrastructure
- Lack of airport locations centrally
- Lack of transit
- Highways deteriorating

Transportation and Infrastructure

- Public transportation
- Transportation alternatives
- Better/faster transportation
- High speed rail between northern and southern Maine
- Create high-speed rail to increase worker mobility, rural areas
- Support and grow metro line, micro-rails
- Invest in rails, air to exchange goods and services
- Invest in transit – consolidate systems
- Tax credit to incent rehab of existing structure/ old mills in rural Maine
- Base bond package investments on identified priority projects/programs

Workforce Development

- Too much reliance on outside expertise, not enough leveraging existing assets
- Lack of prep/skills
- Advanced degrees not available – can’t conveniently upgrade skills
- Under-educated/ under-employed
- Large number of small businesses without resources
- Credential requirements
- Lack of skills training for higher level jobs
- Higher level wage earners retiring
- Not enough credentialing
- Lack of excellent college education/ affordable
- Lack of vocation education
- Lack of knowledge of current opportunities
- Skills sets of the workforce to support start-ups: engineers and STEM
- Lack of vocational training
- Credential requirements
- Lack of skills training for higher level jobs

Workforce Development

- Coordination and collaboration of training programs
- Better/increased opportunities for internships
- Growth in educational skills
- Businesses need to pay premium and attract workers
- Remote, online training
- Resource USM for engineering etc.
- Apprenticeship resourcing
- Institute new credentialing system – Commissioner of Prof. Regulations
- Change practices to have the best public education in the world
- Apprentice programs
- Develop system to connect rural people to remote work
 - Flex jobs
 - Analyze existing
- Incentivize Portland employers to work remotely
- Coordination/ collaboration of workforce attraction
- Trade school adjacent to high school

- Wages not great
- Various degrees have unknown or misunderstood professional implications
- Highly skilled immigrants forced to seek work elsewhere
- Regressive federal work permit policies
- Licensing time and access to capital
- Immigrants cannot get licensed in their field
- Immigrant assistance to be productive/ credentialed while waiting for the federal process
- Why do people go to Boston and NY for work?
- Talent and workforce shortage
- Immigrant population -bring this workforce up to speed
- Transfer credentials
- Note enough jobs beating the nat'l median workforce salary – Pay gap
- Remote workers are working/ learning with companies out of state but living here
- Need shells gap and workforce training
- Population, lack of adequate workforce
- Wage differential for skilled labor Portland vs. Lowell, MA is nearly double
- Wages and salaries
- Tech training lacking
- Lack of connectivity to college students (public and private)
- Advanced degrees not available
- 200,000 Mainers mismatched jobs

- Fast track immigration to professionals, professional certification, employment and social integration
- Reward maintain B “GPA”
- Incentivize companies to hire new Mainers into median and high level positions - State should take lead on this issue
- Have this planning process specifically reach out to “new Mainers”
- Automation at resource-driven level and re-education for next tiers
- Support and scale companies here already for increase in salary and job opps
- Education stipends, maintain GPA
- STEM forgiveness programs
- Increase programs that offer tuition forgiveness for every year worked in targeted geographic or sector
- Apprenticeships funding. Scholarships/ incentives/
- College loan forgiveness
- Student loan forgiveness
- USM based credential center
- No debt relief for college grads
- Grow internship and apprentice programs
- Student loan forgiveness

- Other**
- Poor external messaging for opportunity
 - Distance gaps
 - Education access
 - Wealth inequality
 - Urban/rural divide

- Other**
- Make being green a priority
 - Work on participation in local areas. 20 voices should not make all the decisions
 - Market ourselves as green leader
 - Look at other working models

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not enough participation of young people in this conversation • Poor social services in rural areas • Healthcare considerations and limitations; older, less healthy rural communities • Can't afford co-pays or deductibles • Social challenges • Health care costs • Opioid crisis • Perceived or real attitudes about "other people" • Youth crisis in mental health and substance abuse • Resistance to change • New economy • Parking issues in Portland • "from away" bias • Fear of change • Benefits of educators • Lack of diversity, inclusion and access to meetings like these • Strengths may be weaknesses and vice versa in the analysis • Assumption older Mainers won't participate is debatable • Big ideas not embraced • Too many layers – where do you turn? • Not one entity armed with complete "story" • Lack of pertinent data policy and resources • Acclimating • Language • Cultural perception – Maine is not welcoming or easy/ available to find work • Poverty • Education funding • Maine is a rural state • Rural state, few metro – rural/urban integration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invest in community capacity • Look to models elsewhere e.g. Germany • Create access to affordable direct care workers (priv and Medicaid funding) and involve elders wisdom, time and resources • Better investment in humans – foster system, schools, people with addiction • Help rural Maine be creative and come up with its own solutions • Better connected to Northeast eco centers than we think • Capitalize on visitors • Model climate change impacts – new industries • Alignment among entities – establish core messaging • Establish most wanted list • Focus on children <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ After school art and sports ○ Coaching/mentoring ○ Meet basic needs, food, shelter, clothing, sleep • Learn from Iceland i.e. changes in education, substance abuse crisis, etc. • Reduce barrier to development • Time to develop must be shortened • Promote public health • Address substance abuse • K-12 aspirations • "Biz by sell" website – need to market • Opps. Attract filmmakers who love to do business here • Open convention center within Portland • Return some critical "home economics" to education • Monetize Maine climate – resilient assets • Invest in social system assets to build critical community that supports youth • Energy investment, new green technology • Focus on growing more resources
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<ul style="list-style-type: none">• K-college first class education• Energy costs• Electricity/energy costs• Too humble (D ? mindset)• Problem with tourism acceptance – don't want things to change• Lack of excellent K-12 public education• Low state GDP• Trying to financially support economically unsustainable regions of the state• Costs – companies were to offer benefits• Fragmentation – too many individual efforts• NIMBY: oppose growth• Maine does not accept good – wants perfect• Reactive NIMBY• Maine children not meeting their full potential• Student loan debt• Financial knowledge, needs later in life	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Look at places where things are working• Growth attitude starts at the top with in up from people and businesses
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Barriers

Solutions

<p><u>Broadband</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broadband- online business education • Broadband • Broadband • Infrastructure/broadband • Infrastructure / broadband • Technology/broadband • Broadband, work from home options 	
<p><u>Childcare</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child care, wellness • Health, access care • Childcare/affordability, accessibility • Childcare • Childcare • Childcare • Childcare • Lack of childcare 	
<p><u>Housing</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing/heating • Lack of understanding of low income living 	
<p><u>Population growth</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can't attract or retain growing company- declining population • Opportunity • Population decline • Population growth • Loss of population • Shortage of people • Increasing number of retirees • Generational poverty • Retirement 	<p><u>Population growth</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better opportunities for increase number of available people

<p><u>Innovation and entrepreneurship</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Money for R&D universities and colleges • Tax models to entice existing businesses • Funding for new businesses, grant- low interest • Lack of industrial agriculture 	<p><u>Innovation and entrepreneurship</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize financial package to bring business into Maine • Money with ties to keep solution local <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Nanotech in wood biofuel • Marketing, money for marketing • Marketing • Money for R&D universities and colleges • Tax models to entice existing businesses • More educational opportunities for business • Fund high tech
<p><u>Regulatory environment</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost of energy • Energy and transportation cost • Taxes • Regulatory, high regulated insurance industry • Welfare cliff • High tax state • Taxes • Mandates from government taxes 	<p><u>Regulatory environment</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Property tax incentives to move to more rural areas, tax incentive, pine tree zone • Address highly regulated insurance industry
<p><u>Transportation and infrastructure</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transportation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Distance to market ◦ Workforce ◦ Tourism, access to region • Transport • Transportation • Transportation • Roads • Transportation • Access to transportation • Transportation • Transportation town to town 	<p><u>Transportation and infrastructure</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More public transportation • Rail improvements • Air cargo • Public transportation • Taxi/uber? Possible private industry • Quicker transportation

<p><u>Workforce development</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labor shortage • Labor shortage • Low participation of workforce • Skills/education • Workforce numbers and skills • Education cost • Wages • Foreign workers • Training programs • Disconnect k-12 higher ed, internship to careers • Need apprenticeships • Cost of education • Skill mismatch/lack of workforce trades • Support for education development • Lack of educational opportunities • Unskilled labor force • Workforce participation • Lack of skills • If you get a degree here, you can't get a job here that will support paying off student debt • Lack of competition and slow turnover may lead to slow wage growth • Student loans limit young worker options 	<p><u>Workforce development</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult ed • Focused earlier (middle school) • Incubators at empty schools • Program to develop and support businesses to support education • Work with people in the system to reduce barriers to work • Advance training at all levels, high school, college, universities • Create a program longer than 60 hours- workforce • Continue to invest in higher education • Continue to make reforms to welfare system in ME to promote work • Education to industry partnerships • Adult education • Career center • School debt elimination program
<p><u>Other</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location • Digital literacy • Mindsets • Rural areas • Aroostook county needs a bigger voice on state committee level • Location, access to markets • Digital literacy • Collaboration between public organizations • Snowplowing 	<p><u>Other</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adapting infrastructure • Collaborate with Canada • Open pathways for changes/adapting regulation for localized coordination • Pay them up- skill rather than live without • Promoting rural Maine as a place to live and work • Potential for industrial agriculture growth • Promote region • Support to Canada

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to capital • Market connections • Bills must have pro business/ economic indicators • Drug epidemic • Opioid crisis, mental health • Culture • Legislation on international scale • Training • Tourism, employment, attract and retain • Land available • Mental health addiction • Recovering • Lack of affordable specialty healthcare • Economy/welfare cliff • Drug use and abuse • Mental health issues • Speculation • Perception • Southern Maine vs Northern Maine • Funding • Support • Health care costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make Aroostook a place with more opportunities • Attract more people to rural ME • Reproduce more often • Make investments to mental health and treatments • Recreational tourism • Change application, disclose requirements for recovery • Improve marketing of careers in Maine • Lower barrier to entry • Technology • Long term planning • Define what future jobs look like • Mental health
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Note: No barriers or solutions were given for traded sectors

Barriers

Solutions

<p><u>Broadband</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of broadband • Limited public subsidies for critical infrastructure needs (ie broadband) • Rural access to broadband, cell service • Poor broadband • Broadband access • Broadband • Perception from away – no internet – no cell 	<p><u>Broadband</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build up County structure. Fold in EDD and Regional Planning – county does broadband • Wireless broadband • Increase broadband, online ed • Public/private partnership for broadband – utility districts • Broadband- public/private partnerships • Remote broadband (google Loon) • Put more requirements on county government to help broadband, childcare, housing • Access to resources ie broadband – will open many channels • Consider relevance of broadband to needs for public transportation
<p><u>Childcare</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put more requirements on county government to help broadband, childcare, housing • Childcare supply does not meet demand • Childcare • Childcare availability • Lack of affordable, quality childcare • Childcare – lack/cost/quality • Daycare shortage, high quality subsidized 	<p><u>Childcare</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invest/inform our youth. Make education system a strategic carrot to attract people to Maine. Pre-k programs – key for future. Pre-k programs also create childcare options/boost workforce. High school – aspirational education/informational career opps. • Combine Elderly Housing with workforce development housing. Builds community and addresses some barriers. Check the Netherlands for models. Barriers like transportation, childcare, etc. • Combine elderly housing and workforce housing – childcare, home healthcare, centralized and provide transportation

Housing

- Put more requirements on county government to help broadband, childcare, housing
- Affordable housing
- Housing
- Affordable quality housing
- Affordable housing?
- Lack of housing and affordability
- Affordable housing to attract workforce
- Lack of services – no plumbers, electricians, doctors
- Lack of affordable housing

Housing

- Affordable housing – new approach to short term rentals. Encourage long-term
- Promote history of housing stock
- Incentivize developers to create young people starter homes
- State funding and investment sources for entry level housing

Innovation and entrepreneurship

- Aspirational desert (multi-generational)
- Create specialization links for post secondary education. Info from recent immigrants what’s important. Healthcare independent of employers to encourage entrepreneurship.
- Old Economy Biz not productive/competitive/not scaled
- New Economy engagement too low
- Access to capital
- Low aspirations (provincial)
- Access to capital
- Low aspirations
- Cost of doing business/tax burden

Innovation and entrepreneurship

- Understanding and adapting to change – generational/technological. New economy.
- Non-traditional R&D having different types of organizations do the R&D 501c3 ed. Organizations that aren’t higher education
- Leverage the LLC model or the B-corp model to address social issues while encouraging entrepreneurs
- Assess inventory and find what is exciting for private organizations
- Keep your goals SMART
- Attract Fortune 500 companies – figure out how to ease local tensions vs by [illegible]
- ID strategic people with local community who have ideas and resources who may be “out of touch” and connect them with those who want to do stuff
- R&D of commercialization
- Marketing of R&D in Maine
- Scale/consolidate entrepreneurialism efforts
- Embrace/develop technologies- biofuels
- Scaling “angel” investing

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspire • Consolidate resources for business owners to make them successful • Embracing new technology – biofuels, forest products, aquaculture
<p><u>Population growth</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aging population • Population growth • Deep neglect – huge population of children • Young people – professional, well-paying work • Location and demographic/geographic density • Shifting communal demographics • Brain drain out of state markets. • Hard to build a life here. • Low migration/immigration levels 	<p><u>Population growth</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stop loss of existing workforce. Keep/engage existing • Tell young people about opportunities to come in the next decade • Make our job market needs a marketing message. We have jobs and a great place to live – we are a good option. Keep existing and attract from away • Growth of Portland/Lewiston/Bangor strategic to pull regional economies • Play off Portland’s strengths to attract more • Increase migration
<p><u>Regulatory Environment</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tensions, driven by environmental change, to consider regulatory and work focus in marine economy • Cost of government <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Weak counties ○ Duplicate municipal services ○ Lack of regional effort- both gov and commerce • Tax structure • Tax burdens for families 	<p><u>Regulatory Environment</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regionalization – statute of requirements for EDD and RPC functions to be performed by county • Sales, income, property taxes – decrease 3rd highest in US • Lower tax burdens for for-profit businesses and employees - Make Maine the best place to make money
<p><u>Traded Sectors</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perception of farming industry for aspirations (remove the stigma) • Global perceptions and competitiveness in the global market. Barrier to diversity. • Mix of industries, geographies of Maine, aging • Missing data for natural resource sectors for understanding and investment – farming, fisheries 	<p><u>Traded Sectors</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find advantages in the new USMC trade agreement. • Offshore wind • Export to draw in revenue. Services and products (education, etc.) • Zoning and Regulation Planning is more welcome and hotels [illegible] • Change Eimskip CEO – pick 3 or 4

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perception of manufacturing limited in terms of value-added jobs • Resistance to industries representing change in scale, diverse populations, sense of place • Lack of access to broader market 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop effective strategies for assessment while recognizing value of sectors and ensuring that state funding mechanisms are including sector participants at all levels of need and functioning (farming and fisheries)
<p><u>Transportation and Infrastructure</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transportation and infrastructure • Lack of public transportation • Transportation • Airport -dependent on federal. • Transportation costs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Dependence on long haul trucks (50% empty) ○ Lack of rail options ○ Sprawl issue vs. efficiency • Limited public transportation • Public transportation within the “Retirement industry” • Public transportation/infrastructure • Transportation – infrastructure access • Overlapping/inefficient services 	<p><u>Transportation and Infrastructure</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • East-west highway • Connect regional Transportation modes • Encourage investment in older structures. Energy Efficiency • Road tolls with local preference • Transportation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ State level investment in major projects ○ More intermodal hubs ○ Alternates to 95 dependence • Consider relevance of broadband to needs for public transportation
<p><u>Workforce development</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not recognizing the ongoing/impending retirement wave of boomers from the professions and trades – there’s going to be a growing number of well-paid vacancies in the next decade, not all of which can be made up with technology. • Presenting opportunities to Maine next gen/ high school for careers • Training • Difficulty in growing wage goals with rising health care costs for employers • Cost to employers to afford the staff they need • Barriers to higher education (teen pregnancy, opioid issues) • Post-secondary affordability 	<p><u>Workforce development</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jobs for Maine grads program is a powerful program. • Philanthropy, non-profits scholarships to credentials of value programs. • Create schools for aircraft maintenance, fire fighting • Change education – specialize by [illegible] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Workforce development - CTE ○ UMS - -MCC coordination ○ Middle school exposure to choices/CTE tech and bus tours • Increase exposure and collaborations between academia and community leaders and industry; improve practical experiences for students; promote models of including diverse populations • Engage high school system

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connection of career with college • Rural elementary and secondary educational decline • De-centralized services and offices • The complexity of the farming market • Social fabric and communities are fraying lack of generational role models • Lack of credentials • Lack of opportunities and technical training • Substance abuse disorder unable to work • Training/education • Work ethic? Entrepreneurs leave because no workforce • Lack of grad and professional programs • Shortage of trades • Business need incentives and workforce • Skills training/lack of credentials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase access to post secondary education/certificate programs
<p><u>Other</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change culture/mentality – change our story • Get away from the “fairy stories” we tell ourselves. • Work on the current school cohort to highlight where truth deviates from the narrative. • Highlight efforts to change • Big bets/ prioritize messaging to go for a few big wins. Big wins can drive fly wheel for states. • Free breakfast and lunch to students’ school lunch program. Food in a backpack program needs more • Some local schools have 40% student population unable to complete school day based on social/behavioral issues • Financial literacy for our citizens. • Self-deprecating attitude. • Healthcare costs within the “Retirement industry” • Food insecurity for children and families 	<p><u>Other</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional collaboration/services – shared police/fire • Farm Fish – natural abundant water • Not a few pennies to everyone – not enough pennies – concentrate on centers – focus into creating areas of strength • More marketing outside of Maine. Commercial and governmental ambassadors both domestic and international. • Local development of flexible models, with state funding support • Inclusive community conversations • Create education for planners • For general consideration, sprinkling funds vs game-changing funding strategies • An economic plan for different demographic/geographic variables. • Focus on some strategic projects rather try to do too much at once

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you target resources to areas of the state that are growing or do you spread resources everywhere (i.e. road repair?) • Municipal access to planners • Lack of planners • Generational expectations • Limited attention to policy focus and design on rural areas of state • Need for proactive long-term visioning at state government level • Minimal inclusion of marginalized communities in planning conversations • Diffused/lack of info about success • Old attitudes from previous admin • Passive economy -vacationland • Post secondary education centers compete with each other • Create specialization links for post secondary education. Info from recent immigrants what's important. Healthcare independent of employers to encourage entrepreneurship. • Lack of access to substance abuse and mental health • Substance abuse disorder • Lack of access to mental health services • Lack of celebration of success (since Angus King!) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Branding – Mkts and media campaign. Image of what's in it for a Maine resident? Success stories. Beyond tourism. • Control opiate distribution • Leadership voice from state level about success and celebrations
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Barriers

Solutions

<p><u>Broadband</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broadband/lack of 	<p><u>Broadband</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broadband expansion • Expand broadband access • Provide state/federal funding for broadband expansion • Incentivize home ownership in rural places along with rural broadband.
<p><u>Childcare</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Childcare – cost and access • Childcare costs for young families • Child care (access and cost) 	<p><u>Childcare</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand childcare tax credits • School start times to work w/childcare needs and workforce needs
<p><u>Housing</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stigmas about apartment/workforce housing/low-income housing • Work to residence living spaces • Lack of housing (not there or not affordable) • High cost of housing, no “affordable” housing for young families • Housing costs • High housing costs • Lack of Rec & cultural amenities • Housing costs and transportation costs – as a proportion of income is very high here • Lack of affordable and safe housing • Housing • Housing, cost of housing 	<p><u>Housing</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incentivize home ownership in rural places along with rural broadband. • Towns need to loosen zoning law and/or moratoriums to include workforce and higher density, affordable housing • Taxes – property rates • Zoning – single family housing • Zoning change to allow for [illegible] density • Tax incentives to build houses • Continue mill redevelopment, housing Affordability • Lower costs for housing • High density housing • Zoning/planning to allow “density” • Sponsor greater density housing development (zoning changes). Add incentives for mixed income housing development. • Support wider range of housing types and finance opportunities (allow for more density; remove hurdles to ownership and even condos) • Support small and tiny houses.

<p><u>Innovation and entrepreneurship</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need more private and public investment • Need more R&D 	<p><u>Innovation and entrepreneurship</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Automation of technology to upscale job descriptions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Create an atmosphere that incentivizes capital improvements to drive productivity • Automation • Expand first robotics program in high schools and expand access to machining/manufacturing in technical education centers • Provide financial incentives for R&D companies • Tech/arts/manufacturing integrate • Community development precedes economic development which is essential for sense of place. We need to grant opportunities. Grants also help keep programs affordable.
<p><u>Population growth</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of retention strategies • Lack of attention to trends that attract millennials • Lack of immigration and support • People against immigration • Zoning enabled sprawl • A significant amount of people are against immigration • Shrinking population with negative birth rates • Lack of diversity/youth 	<p><u>Population growth</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accept “aging in place” • Re-imagine retirement • Sell remote work • Incentivize local municipalities to allow for dense growth • Find communities who want immigration • Educate state-wide importance of immigration • Regional planning funding to facilitate density • Immigration welcome centers – address lack of diversity • Set up immigration centers in urban centers to help immigrants get established <p>More help with immigration</p>
<p><u>Regulatory environment</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maine’s highest income tax rates, taxes, cost of living in general • Zoning enabled sprawl • Education costs – property taxes • Paying for schools = local tax payer not wanting people in their community • Tax incentives/breaks for self-employed • Tax burden • Administration turnover/inconsistency • Citizen initiatives lead to less stability and even affects our reputation. 	<p><u>Regulatory environment</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Towns need to loosen zoning law and/or moratoriums to include workforce and higher density, affordable housing • Pay larger share of education costs • Allow for self-emp tax deduction • Expand homestead tax credit • Streamline regulations/bureaucracy • Eliminate term limits for state representatives • Create national attention for “life after LePage” head on.

<p><u>Traded Sectors</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of diversity of industry • Our industries (defense, tourism) steal from one another • Lack of awareness of Arts as Economic development and other non-profit sectors • Lack of resources for community development, which is essential for economic development 	<p><u>Traded sectors</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incentivize international trade • Continue mill redevelopment, housing Affordability • Create cross-border alliances
<p><u>Transportation and infrastructure</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transportation • Transportation access • Housing costs and transportation costs – as a proportion of income is very high here • Transportation costs (rail shipping, trucking) • Lack of public transportation 	<p><u>Transportation and infrastructure</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rideshare • Public transport • Public investment in infrastructure • Regional transportation. Provide help use impact investing model • Improved infrastructure • Lower costs for transportation • Expand funding for public transportation, morning train from Wells to Portland, Regional Bus system • Transportation: High speed to Boston, thru state shipping network expansion • Invest in existing urban centers and main streets. Take advantage of the shift. • Energy costs – don't allow monopoly, encourage wind, other alternative energy. Incentive.
<p><u>Workforce development</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of basic Job/communications, skilled • Training not marketed enough • # of people available to work a) skilled b)unskilled • Not enough opportunity • Large population of retired people who don't need/want to work while they are here seasonally • NH very aggressive in workforce • Lack of workforce 	<p><u>Workforce development</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State needs to pay a larger share of training/education • More workforce training and apprenticeship programs • Proportional wages • Remote workplace • More dual crediting – h.s./college and tying to work in Maine • Develop retention strategies by rethinking pay, benefits and work hours

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of education/specific skills • Lack of high technology and automation jobs • Lack of connecting training/support systems to workers. • Lack of coordination of families or grads to tech school and college • Lack of tech training and support of tech training as valuable • Improvement of young workers • Easier to target employees and train in York • Minimum wage • Educational opportunities/ “interesting” jobs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sell the remote workplace as awesome here! Also good for environment. And promote co-work space. • Embrace aging in place, Flip the narrative! Lots of skills, mentors, part-time work- Break down stereotypes of “retired = done”. Re-imagine retirement • Integrate education at all ages with preparation. For participation in society. Market the value of the trades. Work with Maine manufacturing.
<p><u>Other</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NIMBYism • NIMBY • People want to keep everything the same • People are against children • Community - Our story, job opportunities • Low 4th grade reading scores – education • Communication • Climate change • Lack of communication • Student loan debt mitigation • Lack of Rec & cultural amenities • Maine doesn’t compare to other states • Lack of “Maine” identity/brand (shoe, paper, etc) • Misperceptions, poor branding • Geographic disconnect • Best of Best/Worst of worst – needs benchmarking of other states • Previous administration’s reputational impact on the state • Lack of diversity 	<p><u>Other</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing communication • Incentives to work rurally to offset debt • Promote Maine Tech Institute • Invest in rec and cultural amenities • Develop more robust communication and integration between local, state non-profit, industry – better use of social media/web • Beer, education, trails, housing • Attention to trends • Benchmark other states (failures and success stories) – Biddeford! • Launch state marketing to show Mainers and people outside of Maine success stories about Mainers and immigrants • Education focus K-12 and beyond – make it affordable and available • Beer Education Trails Coffee Housing Affordable • Have governor’s advisory council on equity, inclusion, immigration so that affected people are also leading. • Amplify the love of place to counteract the minuses. • Growth management caps are terrible. It’s not needed and it’s exclusive. • Needs as much marketing for life and work as there is for tourism. And capitalize on tourism’s efforts.