



CEDS: Regional Committee Assessment

June 17, 2021

Presented by the Kennebec Valley Council of Governments
Hosted by Will Harper, KVCOG



▶ Welcome

Ole Amundsen, KVCOG Executive Director

oamundsen@kvcog.org

(207) 453-4258 ext. 213

Today's Agenda

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Check-in and Ice Breaker

2

Vision Activity

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Survey Results

4

SWOT Analysis

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Summary and Action Items

Ice Breaker

You've met a new neighbor...

You were out enjoying a beautiful weekend in your community, and you had a conversation with someone who was visiting from away... They mentioned that they were - in fact- moving there in one month. **What is ONE piece of advice would you give them?**

Visioning

Cape Cod Regional Planning Commission

WHERE DO WE WANT TO BE?

This CEDS is dedicated to “Cultivating creativity, diversity, and innovation to build a strong and resilient economy.” Economic development on Cape Cod is about fostering local ingenuity and assets to solve problems while leveraging outside resources, trends, and opportunities. The vision for the region for Cape Cod to enjoy a robust year-round economy with a workforce that lives, plays, and shops locally. Our local economy will be supported by modern and resilient infrastructure, the strategic development of employment and business opportunities, and the resolute protection of the natural assets and historical character that define our region.

Unfiltered Survey Responses

To develop a comprehensive economic strategy to promote both sustainability and growth in the region.

Utilize the region's assets to create an achievable road map that advances specific, measurable economic goals.

For the Kennebec Valley to be a place where all residents have the opportunity to thrive.

Working with people and businesses to create a place that allows everyone to meet their full potentials.

To enhance the economic well-being and quality of life for all citizens of our area with a particular focus on improving economic status for the bottom 25% on the economic ladder.

To make the region a place to visit, work, and play by providing unique experience to attract visitors.

A central Maine road map to the future that takes cues from the past while fostering economic and environmental sustainability through diversity, equality and inclusion of all peoples.

The diverse expertise and talents of the Kennebec valley region coming together to build an economy where individuals and businesses can thrive.

The CEDS plan will coordinate resources and foster ongoing innovations that will provide a sustainable economic foundation in the region.

Strengthen the regional economy

Proposed Vision Statement for Kennebec Valley

Examples:

"Our CEDs plan is a road map to the future, bringing the Kennebec Valley together behind a strategy to promote sustainability and growth for all its residents. "

"Kennebec Valley is the cradle of Maine's natural beauty and a junction to our scenic and cultural treasures, a place that allows its residents to reach their full potential and fosters economic and environmental sustainability through diversity, equality and inclusion of all peoples."

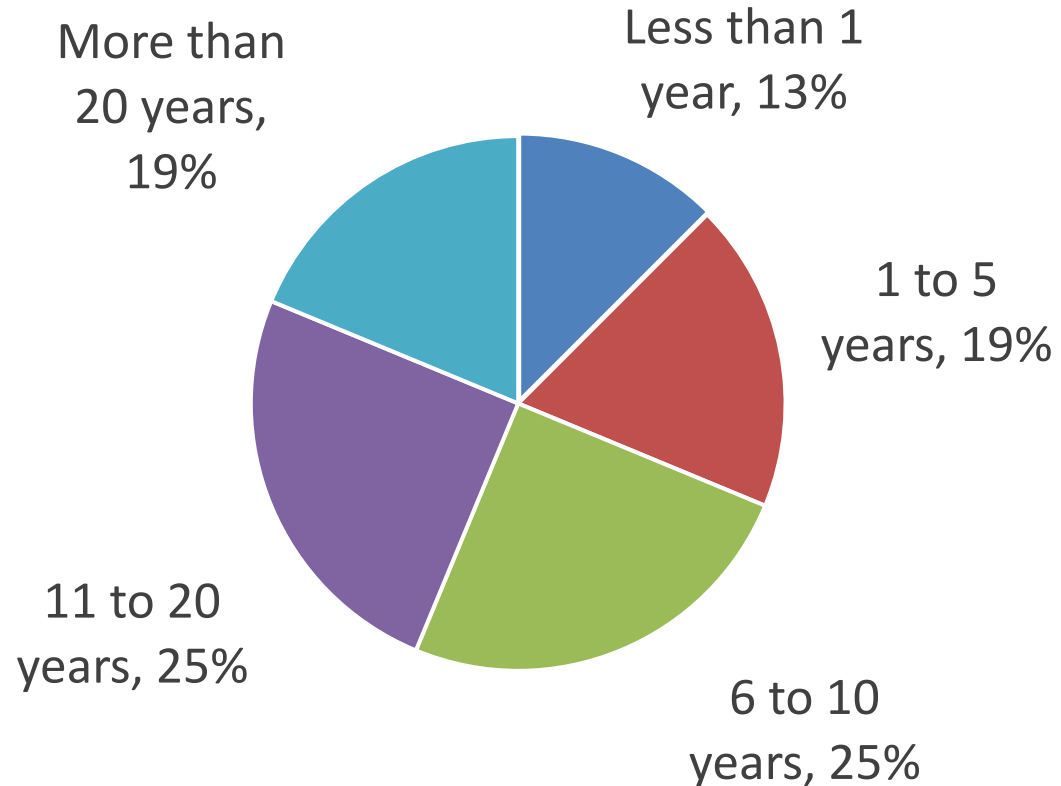
Thoughts, comments, edits to the proposed vision statement above?

Your homework is to **send a sentence for regional vision to Will by July 9th**

"Our vision for the Kennebec Valley is....."

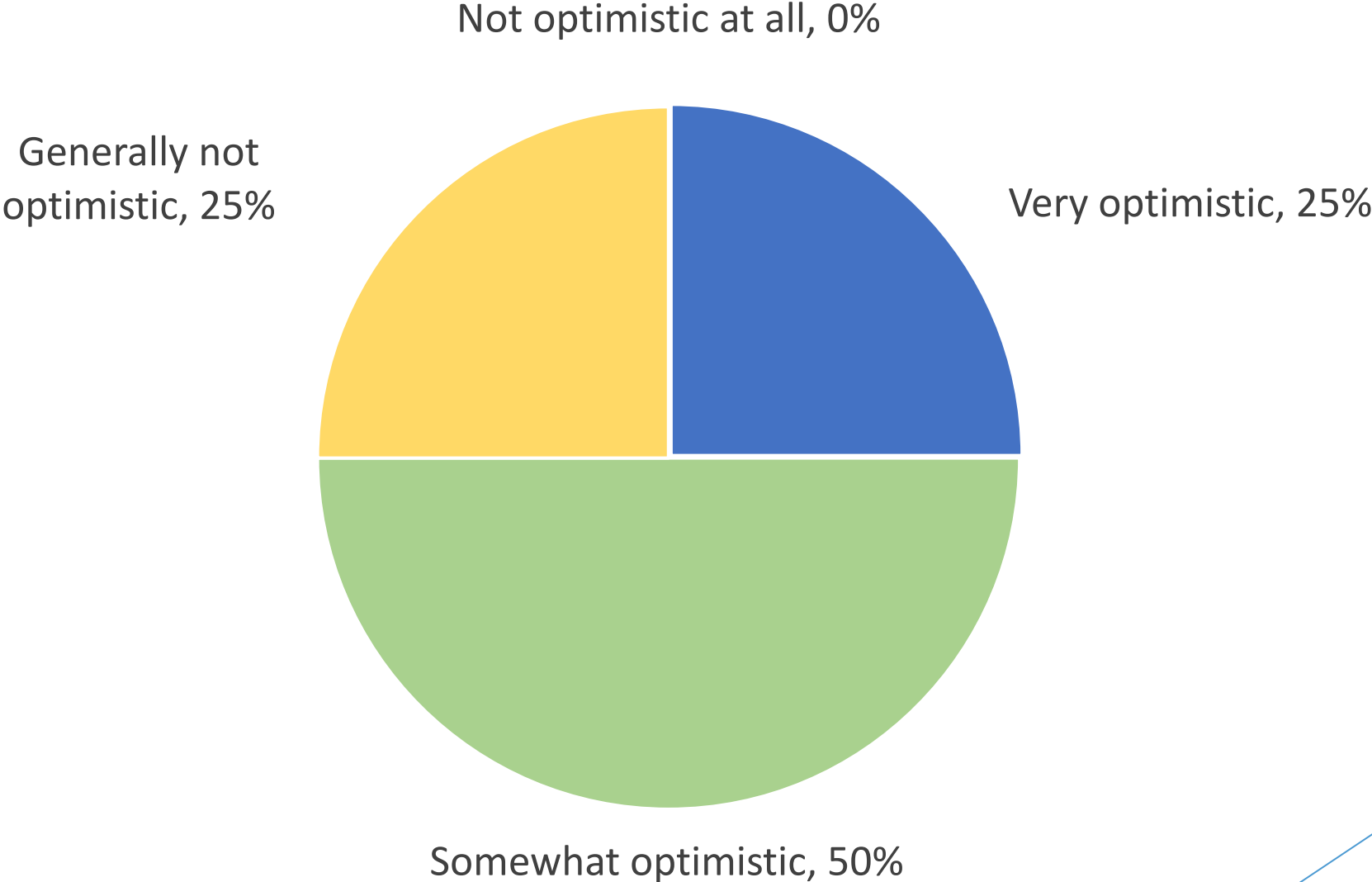
CEDS Drivers of Success Survey

**How long have you worked in/
represented your community?**



- ▶ 17 Respondents;
- ▶ Representing: Waterville, Augusta, Gardiner, Skowhegan, Fairfield, Kennebec and Somerset County, and everywhere in between;
- ▶ Including banking/finance, non-profits, local government, manufacturing, healthcare, tourism, real estate, and community planning/economic development.

How optimistic do you feel about the direction our economy is heading?

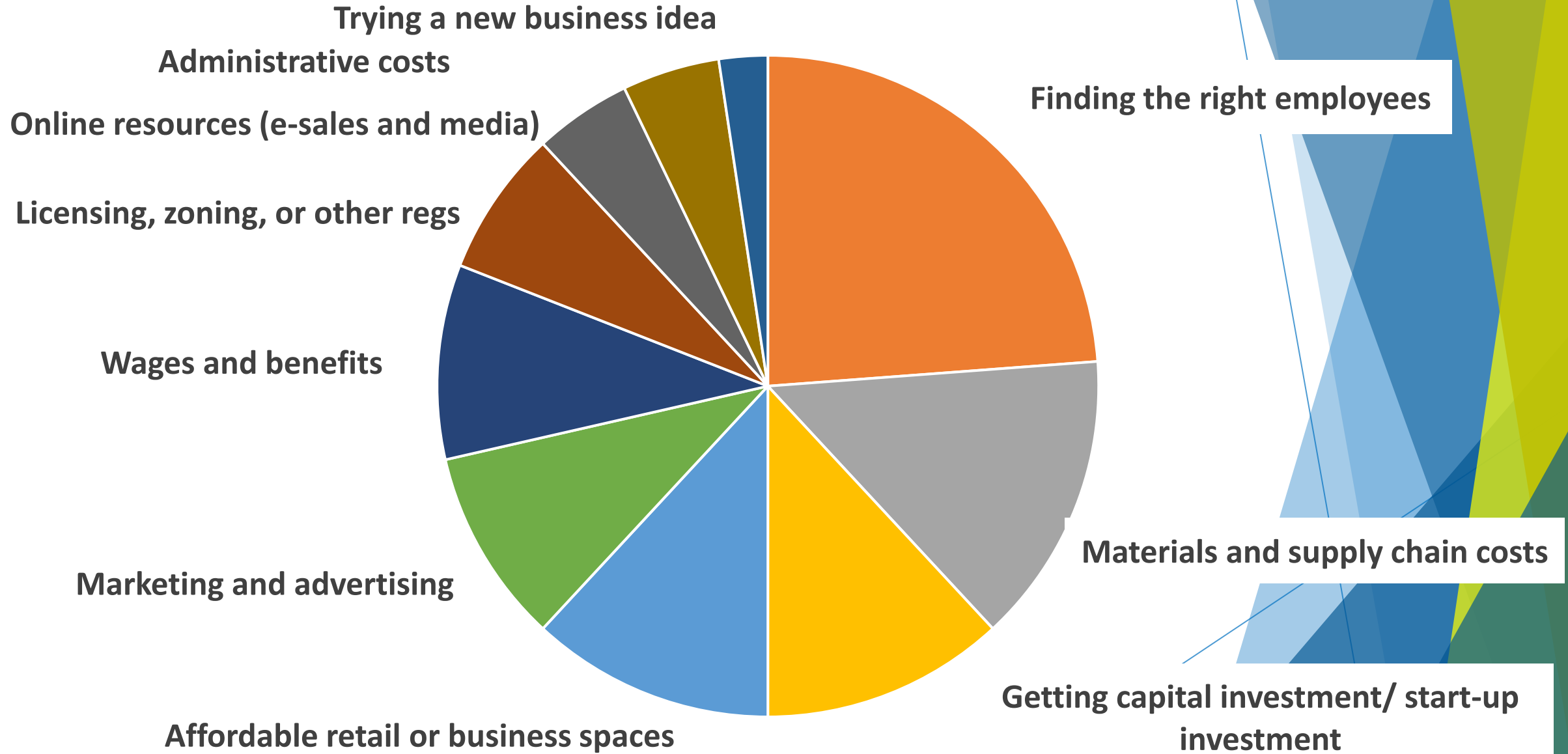


What do you feel our economic development priorities should be?

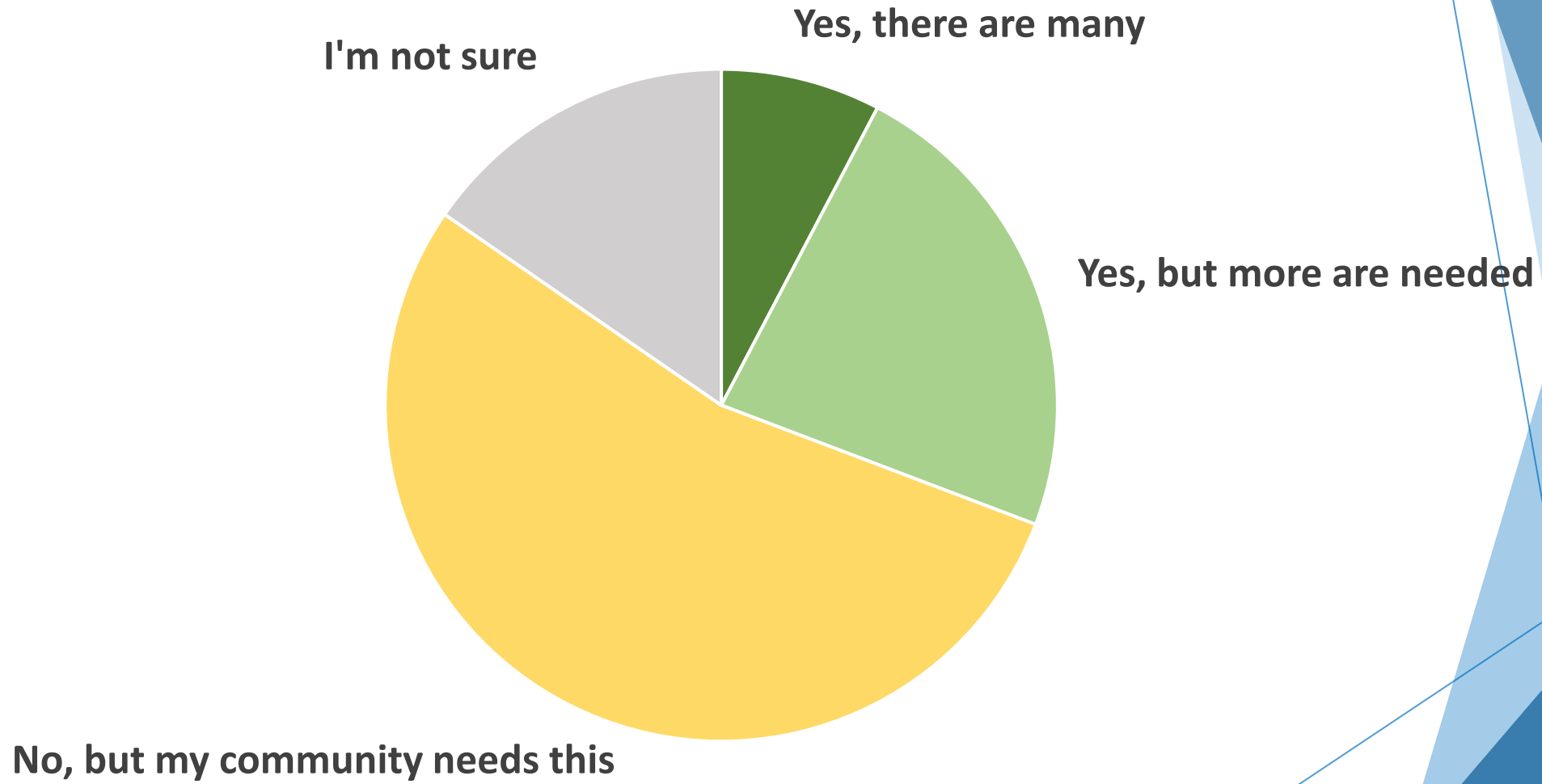
Avg Priority

- | | |
|--|-----|
| • Strengthening existing economic assets | 4.0 |
| • Recruiting new businesses to the region | 4.0 |
| • Supporting/expanding existing businesses | 4.0 |
| • Expanding and enhancing infrastructure | 3.8 |
| • Addressing equity and inclusion | 3.7 |
| • Raising income levels | 3.4 |
| • Engaging municipal governments in economic development | 3.3 |
| • Making education more accessible | 3.3 |
| • Investing in renewable energy technologies | 3.3 |
| • Diversifying the economy | 3.3 |
| • Marketing and exporting assistance | 3.3 |
| • Improving quality of life/ community | 3.1 |

What are the biggest obstacles for local businesses in your community?



Are there options in your community for someone to try a new business idea out?



What would be the biggest benefits to broadband expansion in your community?

Avg Rank

- Remote work and work-from-home opportunities

2.8

- New or enhanced business opportunities

3.1

- Expanded education options

3.3

- Access to telehealth and medical services

4.0

- Connection to a National/Global economy

4.6

- Retail and sales opportunities

5.0

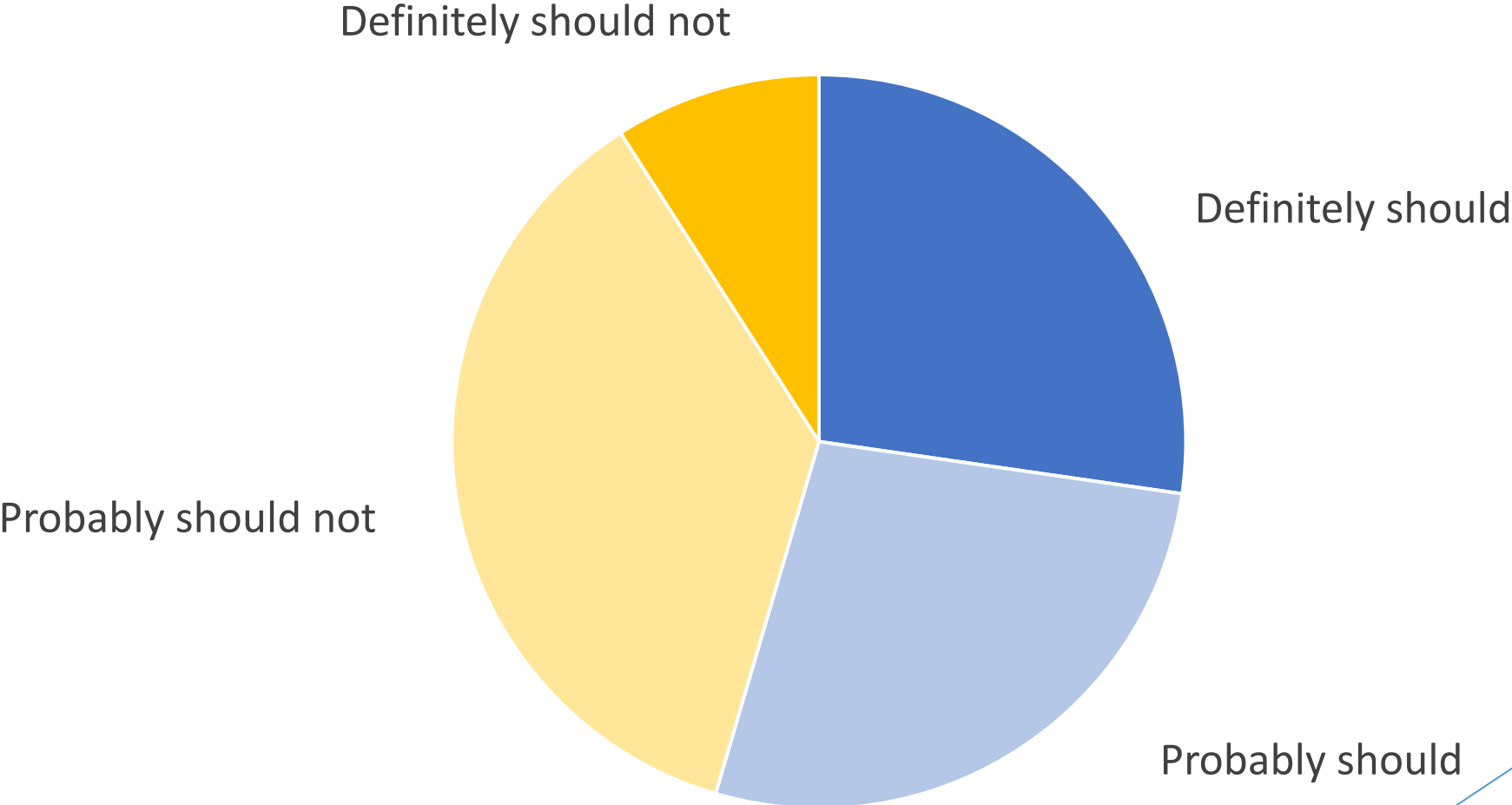
- Improved governance, municipal services, and civic participation

6.3

- Arts, entertainment, and cultural events

7.0

Should your community continue to offer remote K-12 education options moving forward?



What are the most significant obstacles to providing safe and affordable housing?

Avg Rank

- Construction/maintenance costs

2.3

- Poor or deteriorating housing infrastructure

2.4

- Not enough local investment

4.1

- No clear local housing plan/vision

4.3

- Local opposition to affordable housing (NIMBY)

4.7

- A lack of State/Federal investment

5.0

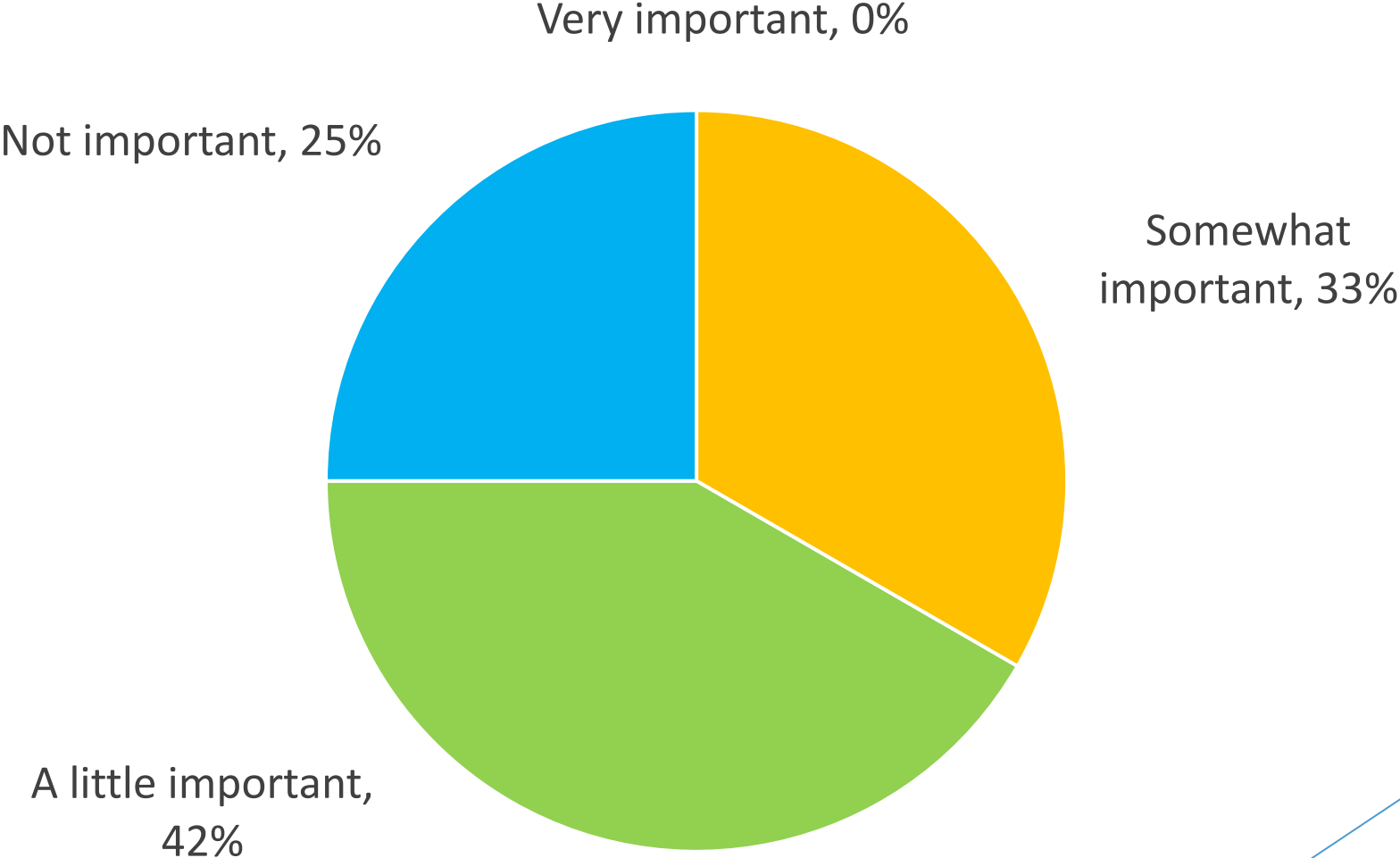
- Regulations and permitting

5.4

- Conversion to temporary rentals/AirBnB

7.5

How important is it for someone be able to live in your community without owning a car?



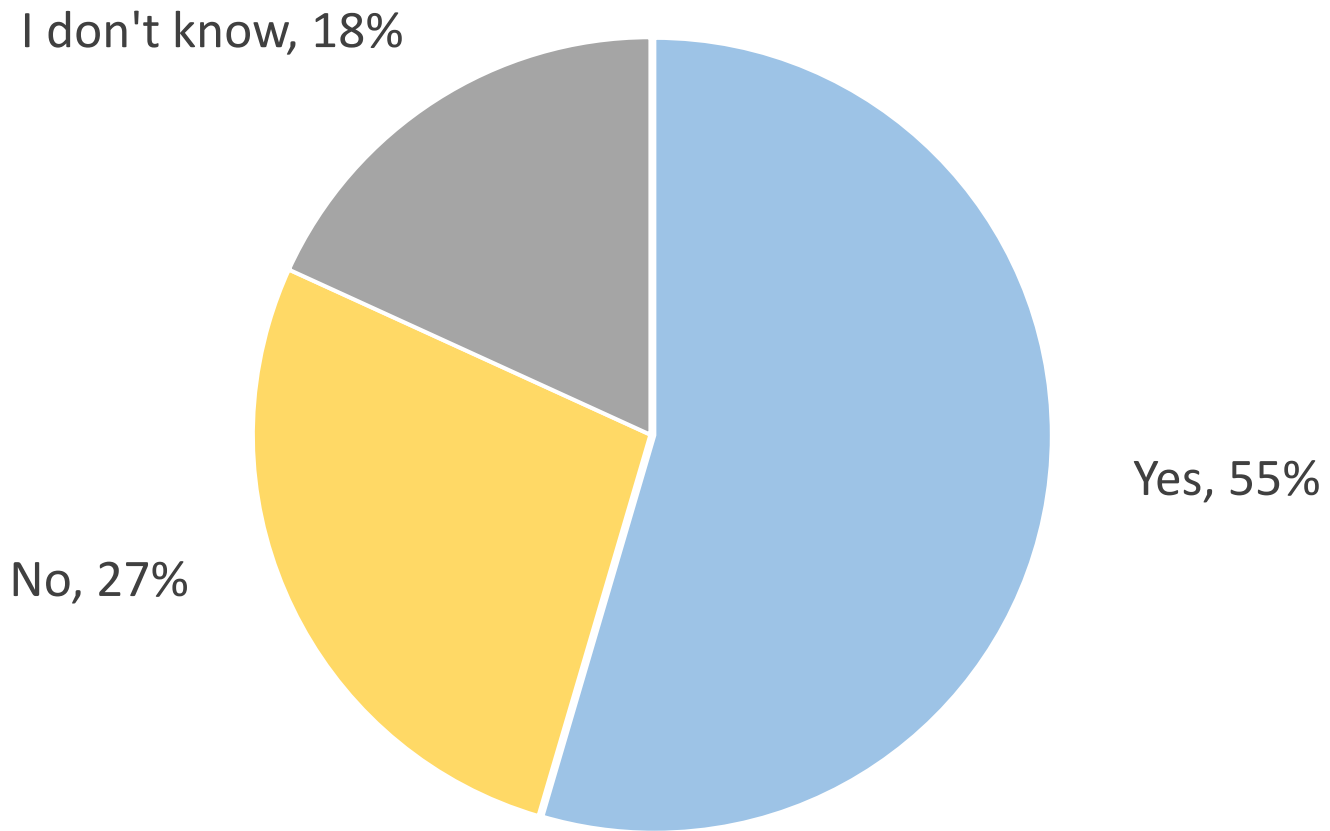
Do you and your neighbors have access to parks, trails, and other open spaces?

A great deal	73%
A lot	18%
A moderate amount	9%
A little	0%
Not at all	0%

Does your community adequately preserve local forests, farms, and open spaces?

A great deal	36%
A lot	18%
A moderate amount	45%
A little	0%
Not at all	0%

Are young people represented in your local government?



What does your community do to attract young people?

- Marketing (esp big businesses and organizations)
- Education opportunities
- Need to build more rental housing
- Enhancing outdoor recreation/ outdoor spaces
- Restaurants, breweries, and other food economy
- Emphasizing quality of life
- Festivals, entertainment, and events

What does your community do to attract retirees?

- Tax incentives
- Quality healthcare
- Housing for those downsizing
- Enhancing outdoor recreation/ outdoor spaces
- Restaurants, breweries, and other food
- Emphasizing quality of life
- Festivals, entertainment, and events

SWOT

STRENGTHS

What do we value? What sets our region apart? What do we do well?

S

W

WEAKNESSES

Where do we need to improve? Are resources adequate? What do other communities do better?

OPPORTUNITIES

Have we met prior goals? Are demands shifting? What needs can we anticipate?

O

T

THREATS

What are the challenges we're facing? What are factors outside of our control?

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
Relative affordability	Lack of available workforce	More affordable housing options	Available housing options
Food and agriculture	High cost of government	Attracting more youth to the area	Cost (financial/regulatory) of doing business
Collaboration among stakeholders	Lack of global market access	Education hub	Lack of skilled workforce
Access to regional amenities	At-risk population	Remote working	Provincialism
Sense of community	Traditional rigidity	Local distribution hub	High cost of government
Size: not too rural or urban	Anti-business attitude	Outdoor recreation/sports economy	Aging physical infrastructure
Natural resources (forestry)	Limited human capital	Redeveloping downtowns	Anti-business attitude
Central geographic location	Distance between services/amenities	Local/organic food	Inability to attract talent
Local shopping	Lack of workforce growth	Technology/bioscience	Disjointed economic development efforts
Unique downtowns	Unavailable affordable housing	Local airports	Unrealistic expectations/vision
Natural resources (forestry, open spaces)	Not welcoming to 'people from away'	Natural resources	Lack of available workforce
Access to supportive government	Lack of broadband access	Wood products manufacturing	CMP power line system reliability and cost
Skilled workforce	Poor infrastructure	International trade	Small population
Education quality/availability	Lack of hotels	Investment from Colby	Availability of housing
Access to supportive business services	Lack of affordable housing	Potential for passenger rail	Good paying jobs
Non-profit service ecosystem	High energy costs	Investments to help 'rebrand'	Climate change impacts
Access to quality healthcare	Need for winter heating	Marketing/utilizing New Mainers to attract more	Political polarization/ineffectiveness
Natural resources (open spaces)	Lack of diversity	Go-Labs in Madison	Cost of healthcare
Access to outdoor recreation	Distance to economic centers	3-ring-binder broadband	Competitiveness from adjacent states
Access to transport	Lack of public transportation	Run of the River in Skowhegan	Brain drain - out migration
Spirit of innovation	Lack of upward mobility	Multi-rail trail system	Aging/depopulating demographics
	Lack of workforce skills	Alternative energy	Political divisiveness
	Local resistance to change/low expectations	Collaboration between education, government, community, and business	Divide between Waterville and Augusta
	Demographic depopulation/aging	New residents attracted to low housing costs	Out of state competition
	High construction costs	Better utilization of natural resources for tourism	Retiring business owners
		International trade/benefit from foreign trade zone 186	Poor wage growth
		First Park business park	Poverty
		Expansion of businesses in southern maine	Public health
		affordable/renewable energy for battery/ev manufacturers	Lack of transportation
		Expansion of restaurants/breweries	"Tyranny of low expectations"
		The Kennebec River	
		Expansion of outdoor recreation	
		Local food growth	
		Entrepreneurial mindsets	
		Back-to-the-land trends	
		Global food economy	
		Outdoor recreation	
		Addressing workforce housing issues	
		Downtown redevelopment including community innovation centers	
		Childcare	

Where do we go from here?

S

Strengths

What can we build on?

How do we claim excellence?

W

Weaknesses

What Goals will address these?

What do we need to know?

O

Opportunities

What efforts have already begun?

What inspires us?

T

Threats

How can we become more resilient?

What can we change, or how do we adapt?

SWOT Analysis

Type your thoughts in the provided sticky notes. Check the section headings to ensure they're in right place.

Strengths

Relative affordability	Access to supportive government
Food and agriculture	Skilled workforce
Collaboration among stakeholders	Education quality/availability
Access to regional amenities	Access to supportive business services
Sense of community	Non-profit service ecosystem
Size: not too rural or urban	Access to quality healthcare
Natural resources (forestry)	Natural resources (open spaces)
Central geographic location	Access to outdoor recreation
Local shopping	Access to transport
Unique downtowns	Spirit of innovation
Natural resources (forestry, open spaces)	

Weaknesses

Lack of available workforce	Lack of hotels
High cost of government	Lack of affordable housing
Lack of global market access	High energy costs
At-risk population	Need for winter heating
Traditional rigidity	Lack of diversity
Anti-business attitude	Distance to economic centers
Limited human capital	Lack of public transportation
Distance between services/amenities	Lack of upward mobility
Lack of workforce growth	Lack of workforce skills
Unavailable affordable housing	Local resistance to change/low expectations
Not welcoming to 'people from away'	Demographic depopulation/aging
Lack of broadband access	High construction costs
Poor infrastructure	

Opportunities

More affordable housing options	manufacturing	community, and business
Attracting more youth to the area	International trade	New residents attracted to low housing costs
Education hub	Investment from Colby	Better utilization of natural resources for tourism
Remote working	Potential for passenger rail	Investments to help 'rebrand' New Mainers to attract more
Local distribution hub	Marketing/utilizing	Go-Labs in Madison
Outdoor recreation/sports economy	3-ring-binder broadband	Run of the River in Skowhegan
Redeveloping downtowns	Multi-rail trail system	Alternative energy
Local/organic food	Collaboration between education, government,	
Technology/bioscience		
Local airports		
Natural resources		
Wood products		

Threats

High cost of government infrastructure	Availability of housing	and Augusta
Aging physical infrastructure	Good paying jobs	Out of state competition
Anti-business attitude	Climate change impacts	Retiring business owners
Inability to attract talent	Political polarization/ineffectiveness	Poverty
Disjointed economic development efforts	Cost of healthcare	Public health
Unrealistic expectations/vision	Competitiveness from adjacent states	Lack of transportation
Lack of available workforce	Brain drain - out migration	"Tyranny of low expectations"
CMP power line system reliability and cost	Aging/depopulating demographics	
Small population	Political divisiveness	
	Divide between Waterville	

Strengths

What are we doing well? Positive Attributes of our region?

Central
Geographic
Location

Affordable
Land

Strong
HealthCare
System

Access to
Higher
education
and job
training.

Close-Knit,
Collaborative
Community

Forest as
a resource

Natural
Beauty

Strong
Nonprofit
Presence

Rural

Local
Food

Outdoor
Recreation

Transportation
Access.

Access to
Leadership

Highly skilled
and educated
workforce.

Weakness

What do we lack? What can we improve on?

Rural

Aging
Population

Lack of
Welcome

Broadband
Access

Public
Transportation

Youth
Migration

Anti-Business
Attitudes

Global
Access

Infrastructure

Identifying
at-risk
populations

Traditionalist
Attitudes

Cost of
Government

Lack of
Available
Workforce

Dilapidated
Buildings

Inadequate
(affordable)
housing

Human
Capital is
Limited

Opportunities

What can we do more of? What trends can we take advantage of?

Historic
Downtown
Districts

Localized
Distribution
Hubs

Entrepreneurial
/Startups

Natural
Resources to
attract
vacationers

“Back to
Lander”
trends

Alternative
Energy sites

Remote
Work

Passenger Rail

Expansion of
Southern
Maine
Businesses

International
Trade
Opportunities

Utilize Local
Airports

Multi-Rail
Trails

Kennebec
River =
Untapped
Potential

Downtown
Redevelopment

Outdoor
recreation
identity

Threats

What's stopping us? What are other regions doing?

High cost of government

Inability to attract talent (skill?)

Cost of Doing Business

Political Polarization

Housing Availability

Popularity of locally sourced, organic food consumption

Small Population

Rising Healthcare costs

High cost of government

Provincialism

Disjointed efforts

CMP Power Line System

Climate Change Impacts

Pandemic

Unrealistic expectations or vision

Summary

Wrapping it all up...

- ▶ What is ONE thing you will take away from today's conversation?
- ▶ What is ONE question you want to learn more about?

“Data Dive” Meeting

Wednesday August 18th 4:00 - 5:30PM

- ▶ We will be diving more deeply into the questions that have come up today...
 - ▶ Does the data match our perceptions and experiences?
 - ▶ What are the things we can and can't measure easily?
 - ▶ What are we *actually* measuring?
 - ▶ How can we use this information to make better decisions?
 - ▶ What do we have the power to change? What is out of our hands?
 - ▶ Are we working towards “goals” or “measurements”? What's the difference?