

JONESPORT and BEALS LOCAL ECONOMY PROJECT

You shared your ideas, and here's what's next

Early in the summer, conversations were held in Jonesport and Beals to understand what community members want to learn more about and what people care about in relation to the local economy. In June many community members shared their ideas and questions at conversations held at Moosabec Variety, Jonesport Pizza, the Town Halls, post offices, and library. In combination with conversations held at Downeast Institute in March and the High School in May, 65 community members have shared their ideas.

Access to better, local-level information

These ideas and questions from the community conversations are an essential part of the Jonesport and Beals local economy project. In the project, Jonesport and Beals are working with partners in order to increase the communities' access to local-level data and information to help guide local decision-making. The partners include the Towns and communities of Jonesport and Beals, Sunrise County Economic Council, Downeast Institute, University of Maine Machias, Margaret Chase Smith Policy Center at UMaine, and Maine Sea Grant. A small grant from the University of Maine helps to provide funding for a portion of the local partners' time, as well as a subscription to access up-to-date economic data.

The economic issues people care about

All the ideas and questions that community members in Jonesport and Beals shared have been reviewed and then related to each other in order to identify major themes.

The most common themes in the ideas and questions from the community conversations are:

- Fishing, Fisheries, and Fishing Culture
- Employment and Industry
- Population and Demographics

Lesser common themes are:

- Infrastructure
- Recreation and Amenities
- Taxes, Costs, Inflation, and Income
- Housing and Real Estate

Least common themes are:

- Questions about this project
- Education
- Pandemic Impacts
- Change Over Time
- Business

Priorities for the economic analysis

After reviewing the common themes from the community conversations, the project partners met to prioritize the themes to help focus the economic analysis that will be the next phase of the project. Two themes ranked most highly: *Fishing and Fisheries* and *Employment and Industry*. Ranking in the middle are: *Infrastructure* and *Taxes, Costs, Inflation. Housing and Real Estate* and *Population and Demographics* were ranked lower.

What's coming up next:

- Collecting data and initial analysis – Now UMaine economists are collecting data related to the priority topic areas and will conduct an initial economic analysis.
- Jonesport and Beals review - Once the initial economic analysis is ready, we'll set up more community conversations to ask if the initial analysis makes sense with what you know about your community and to ask for your help to identify any town-level data that we can use.

Looking for more information?

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