



January 21, 2020

To: The Town of Falmouth, Maine

For: Town Visioning and Values Facilitation

Our Qualifications

Established by Craig Freshley in 2003, Good Group Decisions has served hundreds of clients with meeting facilitation, strategic planning, training seminars, mediation, and comprehensive planning. Good Group Decisions helps clients resolve differences of opinion, make group decisions efficiently, establish a collaborative culture, and find consensus on important community matters.

Craig has specific expertise in the field of comprehensive planning and community visioning. Prior to starting Good Group Decisions, Craig worked in the Maine State Planning Office which was responsible for reviewing comprehensive plans from towns across the state, ensuring that they met the goals and guidelines of the *Growth Management Act*. As a consultant, Craig has worked with numerous Maine towns to develop and update their comprehensive plans. Craig's strong facilitation skills and techniques have proven effective in helping communities discern their vision for the future and articulate their values. Craig has worked for many years with the Falmouth Town Council to facilitate their annual retreat.

Depending on the scope of work, Craig might engage Associate Facilitator Markos Miller and Executive Assistant Wanda McNeil. Markos is an experienced facilitator with a background in non-profit development, strategic planning, education, business development, and municipal planning. Wanda McNeil provides a full range of administrative support to the team.

Our town visioning facilitation approach is based on the following principles:

We Are in a Partnership

We provide a structure and environment that helps bring out the best of your community's vision of its future. We encourage your creative ideas regarding process and content.

Inclusive Facilitation

We make sure that all views are heard. We manage meetings so no one dominates and everyone has an opportunity to participate. We use state-of-the-art tools to gather input from all perspectives in all sorts of ways. Community members and stakeholders feel heard, feel a sense of ownership of outcomes, and leave enthusiastic for future work together.

Product and Outcome Oriented

With every project we insist on specifying the desired outcome or objective at the outset. Then we design the project to achieve such outcomes, and keep them in mind throughout the project. During the process we help you refine your vision and values, then help you identify measurable goals with action timelines and lead responsibilities. We prepare a written report for every meeting that we facilitate.

Many Benefits, More than Just a Written Plan

The community visioning processes we facilitate not only result in written documents that reflect group consensus but also build shared understanding, buy-in, and unity among members of your community.

In all our work is evidence of our company values and ethics. See GoodGroupDecisions.com to learn more about our mission and values, our approach to facilitation, and a complete client list with descriptions of each project and testimonials about our work.

Our Understanding of the Project

Phase 1

The focus of Phase 1 of Town of Falmouth Comprehensive Plan Update project is the planning and facilitation of a public process for the Town of Falmouth, Maine in order to develop a Town Vision and Values Statement for future use to inform the Town's comprehensive planning process.

- Good Group Decisions will develop and conduct a robust public process that leads to the development of the Vision and Values Statement.
- Based on public input from the public participation process Good Group Decisions will provide a Vision and Values Statement summarizing the community's desired future community character.

- The Phase 1 work and Good Group Decisions' team will be overseen by the Town Council and applicable committees.

Craig Freshley will serve as lead on the project.

Phase 2

The focus of Phase 2 of this project is to work with the Town to update the 2013 Comprehensive Plan, in compliance with the goals and guidelines of the *Growth Management Act*.

This Comprehensive Plan update will include:

- The vision statement summarizing the community's desired future community character from Phase 1.
- A summary of the public participation process undertaken.
- A regional coordination program.
- Minimum required analyses, condition and trend data, policies, and strategies.
- A Future Land Use Plan with associated maps and narratives.
- An implementation section.
- Provision for future periodic evaluation of the plan and its implementation.

Even though we have provided our understanding of Phase 2 as requested, we are not interested in taking the lead on this Phase. For one thing, Good Group Decisions does not have appropriate land use planning expertise or map-making ability. We would be happy to consider serving as a sub-contractor to a lead consultant or working directly with the Town on public participation and meeting facilitation aspects of Phase 2.

Considerations for Scope of Work

Good Group Decisions response is focused on Phase 1 of this project. We specialize in working with the public to articulate their vision for the future of their communities. We work closely with local councils and committees to clarify the goals of the project and to develop public engagement strategies that will help achieve and build support for those goals. Our public outreach processes are highly engaging and bring out the aspirations of a community. Community visioning processes is one of our specialties.

Following is a brief description of the types of approaches we typically implement. If awarded the project, we will work with you to design a scope of work that's an appropriate

fit; which may or may not include these elements. You might think of this list as a menu of possibilities.

Potential Approaches

1. Planning and Decision-making Meetings

- These are meetings of the planning committee and/or board in which data is analyzed, discussions are held, and decisions are actually made.
- Our meetings are highly productive and efficient.
- Click here (<https://www.craigfreshley.com/hallmarks/>) to see how our meetings are unique and what you can expect.

2. Public Input Meetings

- These meetings are to collect community-wide input on issues identified with the client.
- We can organize and facilitate public meetings to achieve multiple goals:
 - Share relevant information and data.
 - Brainstorm ideas.
 - Set priorities.
 - Explore individual topics more deeply.
- Hallmarks of our public meetings include:
 - Robust engagement of participants.
 - Highly interactive formats.
 - Deepen understanding of important issues.
 - Build support for community goals.

3. Focus Group or Stakeholder Meetings

- We can convene and facilitate focus groups that are targeted at key stakeholders in the community.
- These are meetings to gather input.
- Click here (<https://www.craigfreshley.com/input/>) to learn about these.

4. Phone or In-Person Interviews

- We can conduct interviews to gather input from key people.
- This provides a way to gather anonymous input. Findings are often reported in the aggregate and particular comments are not attributed to particular people.
- Click here (<https://www.craigfreshley.com/input/>) to learn about these.

5. On-Line Community Surveys

- Often used to gather input from a large number of people.
- Responses can be anonymous or attributed.

- Click here (<https://www.craigfreshley.com/input/>) to learn about these.

Meeting Expectations

With all meetings we facilitate, here's what you can expect.

- We will become familiar with the meeting facilities and we will set up the meeting room. When practical we will bring all our own equipment such as easels, computer, projector, screen, etc.
- We will prepare handouts, charts, slides, signs, and other materials as appropriate. We will provide supplies such as name tents and tools for cardstorming, multi-voting, and other group decision techniques, as needed.
- We will provide the four essential functions of high-quality facilitation:
 - Provide Structure
 - Encourage Participation
 - Reflect the Group
 - Move the Group Forward
- During the meetings key findings, themes and conclusions will be documented on a large screen or via screen sharing software, on our greenwall or on flip charts. As decisions are made they will be written on the spot for all to see in order to maximize shared understanding and agreement.
- Both Craig and an Associate will attend each meeting. Craig will serve as lead facilitator and the Associate will assist with dynamic facilitation techniques such as real-time documentation of ideas on screen, on-the-spot group surveys and analysis, and/or breakout group discussions. The Associate will also take notes and prepare follow-up reports for each meeting.
- Participants will feel heard and will feel a sense of ownership of meeting outcomes.
- Participants will conclude that the process was a good, efficient use of their time. Objectives will be achieved, good group decisions will result, and participants will leave meetings enthusiastic for future work together.

Similar Completed Projects and References

On the following pages are samples of products from previous work we have done with municipalities on Vision Statements. Below are brief descriptions and references.

Bowdoinham - Good Group Decisions worked with the Bowdoinham community to express their vision for Bowdoinham's future land use, including the village center, open space, waterfronts, and natural landscapes, as well as how to accommodate new development in keeping with the local and historic character of the community. The document also addresses the character of its communities and institutions. The process included a series of stakeholder meetings many of which were run by committee members. The document was unanimously approved by the Comprehensive Planning Committee.

Reference: Nicole Briand, Bowdoinham Town Planner, nbriand@bowdoinham.com

Westbrook - In Westbrook we utilized an exciting and interactive approach for public engagement to inform the development of *Our Vision for the City of Westbrook*, for the City of Westbrook's Comprehensive Plan Task Force. The document articulates a vision for the city as a whole, as well as for the individual regions of the city. This process rested largely on a Saturday morning meeting attended by almost 100 people, and a community-wide survey. The resulting document was unanimously accepted by the task force.

Reference: Michael Foley, Mayor of Westbrook, mfoley@westbrook.me.us

Saco - Good Group Decisions worked with the City of Saco to develop the document *Vision of Saco in 2025* as part of the updating of its comprehensive plan. The document describes the community's goals and aspirations regarding a number of important issues. Maintaining the city as a vibrant and affordable place for a diverse population to live and enjoy the benefits of a strong educational system was a priority. The vision also identifies addresses issues of economic development, the character of the downtown, and the opportunities to "bridge" with Biddeford to redevelop the riverfront mills. The document also addresses the importance of the city's recreational assets and natural beauty. This process included several public input meetings. Also, the City developed and promoted a pretty great video about their visioning project. Check it out here:

<https://tinyurl.com/tlds3tj>.

Reference: Kevin Sutherland, City Administrator, KSutherland@sacomaine.org

Richmond - In Richmond Good Group Decisions utilized a range of graphic and visually oriented strategies to engage the public in issues of future land use. The document below shows how we used 'bubble maps' to help the public identify where they envisioned opportunities for residential, commercial, and industrial development as well as where it was important to preserve and strengthen natural areas and traditional agricultural activities.

Reference: Victoria Boundy, Former Economic Development Director, vboundy@gmail.com

Town of Bowdoinham

Vision Statement

Based on considerable public input, the Comprehensive Planning Committee presents this vision for the Town of Bowdoinham for the year 2021.

In the year 2021 Bowdoinham is pretty much the same as it is today, only better.

The town's rural character, rich history, and natural beauty are preserved. The people here are peaceful, supportive, and tolerant as they have been for generations. The local economy is strong and relatively self-sufficient.

The village is ever more attractive and lively. There are more businesses, another restaurant or two, and sidewalks. New development in the village is in character with the historic buildings and served by enhanced infrastructure.

More of the land is in agricultural use and the food produced is healthy and safe. Bowdoinham farms supply an impressive proportion of local food needs and bring significant money into the community from away. Woods, wetlands, and waterfronts are highly valued as in the past. Continuing a tradition of thoughtful management, Bowdoinham's wildlife habitat and outdoor recreation areas, including Merrymeeting Bay, are treasured by locals and visitors alike. Bowdoinham's country roads continue to be lined with scattered houses, fields, forests and small businesses. New development and stores are in keeping with local and historic character.

We are a hugely diverse mix of blue collar and white collar, young and old, liberal and conservative, from here and from away, and are proud to support each other and our community in the face of challenges. Artists, musicians, and craftspeople are abundant and appreciated. Small businesses and entrepreneurship are encouraged. Though proud to be local, Bowdoinham people are connected to the region and to the world. There is high quality cell phone connectivity and internet access throughout the town.

Bowdoinham is a great place to live, work, play, raise kids and grow old. Specific initiatives are targeted to help youth love, appreciate and engage with their community, and to help elderly live here comfortably and securely. Affordable housing, among a diversity of housing options, is available for young and old.

Specific institutions, central to the appeal of community, are maintained and nurtured; for instance, Town Meeting, Bowdoinham Community School, the Library, the Recycling Barn and Program, the Waterfront Park, the Farmers Market, and the Town Hall.

In the year 2021, Bowdoinham has adapted to global change yet retained its human scale and historic values.

Unanimously approved by the Comprehensive Planning Committee, August 2, 2011

City of Westbrook Comprehensive Plan Task Force

Our Vision for the City of Westbrook

Unanimously approved by the Task Force on February 9, 2011

Introduction

To serve as the basis for our revised Comprehensive Plan, the residents of Westbrook have determined what we value about our City and envisioned how we would like it to be in the year 2021. For the most part we are satisfied with the current comprehensive plan, zoning and land uses, however the Vision for the City as a Whole and Area Visions are intended to represent our preferred future but not close off unanticipated opportunities or be unresponsive to unforeseen circumstances.

Vision for the City as a Whole

Proud of its heritage and supportive of historic activities, Westbrook is a robust city with thriving businesses, attractive buildings, a traditional downtown main street, mature walkable neighborhoods, recreation areas, and an abundance of high-quality jobs.

Westbrook has always kept up with the times, evidenced today by making new uses of old buildings and the river that runs through downtown. Riverside parks, restaurants, shops, and activities attract residents and visitors. Downtown buildings are fully occupied with a mix of uses. Further in tune with the times, downtown Westbrook is a place you can live without a car. We embrace advanced information technology. Pedestrian ways and buses provide easy access to shops, jobs and activities. Westbrook hosts and continues to attract some of the world's most innovative companies with enviable industrial parks.

Westbrook's residential neighborhoods reflect the pride of the people who live there: safe, friendly, diverse, and welcoming. Intermixed among the neighborhoods, commercial, and industrial parts of the City are publicly and privately held fields and forests.

As it always has, Westbrook continues to invest in its future. Westbrook schools provide young people with applied skills for the jobs of tomorrow, and provide opportunities for people of all ages and cultures to educate themselves. It is important to this vision statement that the Westbrook City government is known for its efficiency and provides regulatory and fiscal stability that encourages business investment while maintaining high-quality services.

We want our City to continue to be characterized by a wide diversity of land uses. Our vision is that we have the capacity to guide growth and acknowledge challenges through well-planned zoning while being respectful of our residents, private landownership and business community values.

Vision for Areas of the City

North Westbrook is characterized by its predominantly residential nature with a commercial core along Bridgton Road. This area is generally located north of the Presumpscot River on the east and Cumberland Street on the west. There are attractive gateways into Westbrook along Bridgton Road. Future growth patterns target not only commercial growth but residential growth that demand minimal additional publicly-funded services and infrastructure. New subdivision projects along existing tree-lined corridors maintain a tree buffer along the road. Through voluntary public-private partnerships, additional passive and active recreational opportunities are provided that are attractive to all ages. Existing public facilities such as, but not limited to, the Community Center and City Forest off of Bridge Street are maintained and enhanced for public use. Additional commercial development is focused around the Bridgton Road corridor but small, neighborhood scale, retail uses are considered beyond this corridor. Expansion of the public sewer in this area is not anticipated unless supported by new and substantial development. The existing industrial area is fully utilized. New residential development is in keeping with traditional residential character. We look for opportunities to upgrade roadways to include shoulders adequate to accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists.

East Westbrook is characterized as a commercial gateway into Westbrook from Portland. This area is generally located south of the Presumpscot River, north of the Westbrook Arterial and east of Stevens Avenue. East Westbrook includes a mix of commercial and residential uses. While the commercial properties in the gateway into Westbrook from Portland are maximized by the turnover of the auto-oriented businesses, the residential neighborhoods continue to be buffered, visually and acoustically, from commercial uses. Main Street is improved as a gateway using improved building and site design, underground utilities, landscaping and signage. The residential neighborhoods are long-standing and most often distinguished by tree-lined streets with sidewalks and a well-maintained housing stock that has architectural appeal. Public investment is put toward improved pedestrian and bicycle connections to the core of the downtown.

West Westbrook is characterized by a vibrant, pedestrian friendly downtown with easy pedestrian access to abutting residential neighborhoods. This area is generally located south of Cumberland Street, north of William Clarke Drive and west of Stevens Avenue. This area includes a long-standing residential neighborhood which is joined with the core of Downtown Westbrook by the Presumpscot River. Access to the Presumpscot River for recreational, educational and commercial visibility is enhanced through voluntary public-private partnerships. The Frenchtown neighborhood is improved by an upgraded streetscape and owner investment in buildings and properties. A sense of community and connection within the residential neighborhood and the downtown is of great importance in West Westbrook. This is supported, in part, through the establishment and improvement of mini-parks within walking distance and through ensuring that existing and future large-scale parks include options for all users, children, adults and dogs. Parks, both large and small, are established, owned, and/or maintained by the City and/or public-private partnerships. Residential density in the downtown and nearby is maximized. Public investment is put toward the implementation of the Downtown Streetscape Study

recommendations that improve the pedestrian experience and maximize public use of public spaces. Public investment is also put toward the recommendations of the Riverfront Plan to extend the Riverwalk to the north side of the Presumpscot River via a new pedestrian bridge.

South Westbrook is characterized by a strong mix of residential, commercial, and agricultural uses with an emphasis on attracting businesses in growth sectors that embrace a respect for the built and natural environment. This area is generally located south of William Clarke Drive and the Westbrook Arterial. This area is divided by major roadways, (Saco Street, Spring Street, County Road and Stroudwater Street) and by the Stroudwater River. Gateways to the City in this area are clearly announced and designated. Where new commercial uses are proposed next to residential uses, there is a strong focus on compatibility. In order to enhance mobility and cohesion, the sections of the neighborhood are connected by pedestrian paths, both on- and off-road. As this area continues to build out, parks are planned and provided (via public-private partnerships as in the West area), and traffic-calming techniques are implemented where necessary. These features serve as an attraction for residents and workers, particularly in this area with many large employers. Public investment is placed on road and bridge improvements, improvements in public facilities such as the Public Services building on Saco Street, and on pedestrian improvements.

Vision of Saco in 2025

Draft Statement for Consideration by City Council, February 2, 2016

Saco citizens envision a friendly, welcoming community. They want a small town with a strong sense of community where people help one another, show kindness and courtesy to one another and engage in community activities. Everyone is engaged and volunteering. It is a place with lots of community events and Saco “Spirit” is alive and well. Saco is “vibrant with community spirit, optimism and activity”. Saco is a great place to live, work, learn, play and visit. Young people choose to stay or to come back to settle and raise families. This strong sense of community was the most cited vision response in the Community meeting and the focus groups and was second in the survey responses.

Saco citizens want a thriving downtown. It was the second most mentioned theme in the focus groups and the community meeting and the first in the survey. In 2025, they see more restaurants, entertainment, shops and businesses in the downtown area. Saco Island’s mill is fully restored with both innovative businesses and housing. There is a shared sense of vitality flowing between Biddeford and Saco. “Bridge it with Biddeford because something big, beautiful and profitable can happen at that mill.” There are public open spaces and gathering places. The area is bustling with people of all ages, both local and visitors. There is plenty of parking, easy pedestrian access, safe sidewalks and cross walks and good public transportation making downtown easy to access and pedestrian friendly. The City had grown its downtown businesses and activities while maintaining and enhancing its historic nature and restoring its older homes. It is a model of blending the quaint historic nature with a bustling modern economy.

Business development in general is also a major theme. Respondents see steady, sustainable, manageable growth of commercial activity throughout the City done thoughtfully to control its impact. “Growth is stable and continuous and is following our updated continuous improvement plan.” From that growth the respondents are looking for quality jobs, low unemployment, a reduction in the share of property taxes paid by residents and more retail options. They envision industries, high tech businesses, innovative start ups and retail. People see a business friendly attitude in the city where it is less time consuming to get the necessary permits and easier to bring housing units on line.

Respondents’ vision also includes an outstanding educational system that the whole community is invested in. The facilities are upgraded and use by community as well as the children. Everyone is proud of them. All the children are learning what they need to succeed in life, those headed to college, those looking for vocational training and those with special needs.



In 2025, the natural beauty and recreational opportunities are flourishing. All the new commercial development has not impinged on this valued asset. Residents and visitors alike are actively enjoying the numerous, well marked trails that connect carefully preserved open spaces with the river, the town and the shore. Use of the river has increased. The beaches and dunes are stabilized and enjoyed by residents and visitors.

In spite of the growth in Saco's business development and down town, the city has remained affordable for a diverse group of residents. For several people, that means keeping the taxes low.

Some suggest working with Biddeford to combine services and generate savings or making it easier to build affordable housing.

In 2025 "City Hall is full of people who are passionate about and invested in Saco". Citizens are actively engaged in public affairs – well informed, speaking up, volunteering and running for public office. "Saco will be a progressive and visionary leader in Southern Maine and New England".



RICHMOND - VISION IDEAS of OCT. 21, 2015

COMMERCIAL, INDUSTRIAL AND MEDIUM RETAIL

