

Community Conversations Report

2025-2026



The Community Foundation held the third round of Community Conversations to gather input from residents and ensure its grantmaking reflects the needs and priorities of Hancock County.

Community Priority Voting

Tier 1

Childcare

Housing

Mental Health

Safety

Recreation*

*includes Parks and Fun for All

Tier 2

Arts

Diversity

Transportation

Workforce

These themes received the greatest share of votes across all Community Conversations events and the community survey. This means our community consistently elevated quality of life, safety, health, housing stability, and family support.

Dreams and Challenges

Dreams

- Childcare & Families
- Community & Civic Life
- Jobs & Workforce
- Retail & Services

Challenges

- Childcare & Families
- Housing
- Safety & Crime
- Transportation & Infrastructure

Written responses capture what participants cared enough about to describe in their own words and provide additional context beyond the voting exercise. Dreams describe aspirations or what success could look like, while challenges highlight pain points where people experience friction or barriers today.

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Finding Common Ground

- ✓ Quality of Life Drivers
 - Housing - widely prioritized and the most frequent challenge.
 - Childcare & Families - consistent urgent need.

- ✓ Pain Points
 - Parks, Recreation & Activities - broadly valued community assets people seek more of.
 - Safety - a consistently high priority often by voting rather than detailed narratives.

- ✓ Emerging Issues
 - Transportation & Infrastructure - not always top-ranked in voting but frequently identified as a barrier.

- ✓ New Aspirations
 - Community & Civic Life - Dreams often stress unity and belonging; challenges include division and low participation.
 - Retail & Services - newly identified dream.

Key Takeaways

- Community input continues to point toward a core set of priorities that align with long-standing challenges and opportunities.
- Housing and childcare emerge as areas where the Foundation can play a convening, catalytic or learning role in addition to funding to bring partners together, support pilot approaches and help align community efforts.
- Strong support for parks, recreation, and inclusive community spaces reinforces the importance of place-based and access-oriented investments that contribute to belonging and overall well-being.
- Themes such as transportation, retail/services and community cohesion suggest opportunities for further exploration, partnership, or targeted conversations.
- The results reinforce the value of addressing urgent needs while also investing in long-term community vitality, helping guide the Foundation's grantmaking, partnerships, and strategic initiatives in the years ahead.

Learn more about The Community Foundation at www.community-foundation.com