



**Evaluation of the Orton Family Foundation's Community Heart & Soul Program:
Key Findings from the Experience of Nine Demonstration Sites and Recommendations for
Program Refinements and Dissemination Strategy**

SUMMARY REPORT FOR EXTERNAL DISSEMINATION

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1. Introduction

Overview

Many towns and small cities across the United States are experiencing the downside effects of growth and development, while many others are suffering from the erosion of their economic base, the outmigration of their young people and even a loss of hope. Recognizing the major threat inherent in each of these trends, the Orton Family Foundation developed Community Heart & Soul in 2007 as a means of building vibrant and enduring communities. Heart & Soul is both a philosophy and a model for engaging local residents in determining what makes their community special and what needs to happen to preserve and enhance those core values into the future.

The Community Heart & Soul program model calls for a local coordinating group (the Community Advisory Team) to engage all segments of the community, especially segments that have historically been under-represented in decision making, in a process where residents share their stories, aspirations, concerns and views about the community. This community input is then translated into a statement of shared values reflecting the consensus view of “what matters most” to local residents. This statement, along with other products summarizing the stories and data collected through the process, are intended to inform land-use policy, development plans, formal and informal planning processes, priority-setting by local institutions and organizations, and more generally how residents think and act with regard to their community.

The Heart & Soul model has been field-tested in nine demonstration sites (encompassing 12 distinct towns) in New England and the Rocky Mountain West, four of which began their work in 2008 (Biddeford, Maine; Damariscotta, Maine; Golden, Colorado; and Victor, Idaho), and five in 2012 [Essex (Town of Essex and Village of Essex Junction), Vermont; Gardiner, Maine; Cortez, Colorado; North Fork Valley (Towns of Paonia, Hotchkiss and Crawford), Colorado; and Polson, Montana]. In each case, a local organization – either municipal or nonprofit – organized and managed the process with financial and technical support from the Foundation.

Based on promising results observed in many of the demonstration communities, the Foundation began exploring what would be an appropriate strategy for disseminating Heart & Soul more broadly. To inform this dissemination strategy, the Foundation contracted with a team of researchers at Wake Forest School of Medicine to conduct an independent evaluation of how the Heart & Soul model had been implemented in the nine demonstration communities, what had been accomplished and what challenges had arisen. The Foundation’s staff and Board were also interested in learning how the Heart & Soul model might be further refined, as well as what it takes for a community to achieve success using the Heart & Soul approach. Answers to these questions will guide the Foundation in targeting the model to communities that are “ready” for a Heart & Soul process and have the required capacity to carry out the various steps in the model.

Although the Foundation invested in the evaluation primarily to inform its own strategy and programming, it became apparent over the course of the research that the findings would also have value for those who are leading their community through a Heart & Soul process. Accordingly, the Board approved the creation and release of an abbreviated version of the evaluation report. This summary report retains all the key findings from the full report. Some details on the development and revision of the Heart & Soul model have been omitted for the sake of making the report more readable to a general audience.

The remainder of Chapter 1 provides background on the nature of the Community Heart & Soul program and how the program model has evolved over time, as well as the Foundation's interests with regard to evaluation. Chapter 2 describes the methodology that we employed in conducting the evaluation (e.g., interviews with Foundation staff and local informants, focus groups, site visits and review of documents). We also present the logic model we developed in conjunction with Foundation staff and Trustees. Chapter 3 summarizes the evaluation findings in terms of: a) the community and organizational context within which the nine sites carried out Heart & Soul, b) the purpose(s) that the participating communities had in mind when they embarked on Heart & Soul, c) the actual process through which the communities carried out the model, d) key outcomes, e) the effort and resources that communities invested in carrying out Heart & Soul, f) an assessment of contextual factors that contributed to or inhibited successful implementation, and g) the contribution of Foundation funding and staff support on implementation. Finally Chapter 4 provides an overall assessment of how and where the Heart & Soul program can be a valuable mechanism for communities to engage residents, articulate shared values and take action to improve quality of life over the long run. Chapter 4 also presents a set of recommendations for refining the model, ensuring that the key preconditions are in place within the community, and supporting local actors as they carry out what is an inherently ambitious and intensive process.

The Evolution of the Heart & Soul Model

The Heart & Soul model has evolved through intentional testing, learning and refinement on the part of the Foundation. Many of the core ideas in Heart & Soul grew out of earlier Foundation work such as Routt County Vision 2030 in northwest Colorado and the Borderlands conservation-planning process in Connecticut and Rhode Island. These experiences led to the issuance of a Request for Proposals (RFP) in late 2007 that invited small cities and towns in New England and the Rocky Mountain West to carry out a locally driven planning process that would "identify, preserve, and enhance the heart and soul elements of the community." The Foundation's beliefs and assumptions for Heart & Soul were spelled out as follows:

The Foundation believes that identifying, describing, and stewarding heart and soul attributes is essential to building vibrant, enduring communities — and that when leaders, guided by broad participation, take action they inspire in citizens a deep connection to one another and to what matters most about the places where they live, work, and learn.

The Foundation offered the prospect of \$100,000 grants (over 2 years) to support communities in carrying out the Heart & Soul process. Forty communities applied in response to the RFP and four were selected:

- Biddeford, Maine;
- Damariscotta, Maine;
- Golden, Colorado; and
- Victor, Idaho.

These four communities began their work in 2008 guided by a set of Heart & Soul principles and more specific elements that needed to be included in the process:

1. **Explore and identify H&S attributes of the community** (through a dynamic public outreach program that engages a broad and diverse group of citizens and organizations in exploring and articulating the characteristics that make the community a great place to live, as well as decision making for the community's future);

2. **Share local stories** (as simple or expansive as the community desires, but needs to include listening, building trust and understanding, and capturing the community's qualitative sense of itself and its aspirations);
3. **Use a shared, values-based vision to guide growth** (with the vision based on broadly accepted H&S attributes and themes, and that vision applied to alternative scenarios for how the community might grow and develop);
4. **Develop actionable plans and implement priority activities** (with the implementation plan specifying how regulations and policy will be changed, who will take responsibility, when the actions will occur, and what resources will be required);
5. **Build accountability and share results** (through a system or set of practices for ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the effects of the community's decisions over time, along with regular communication of the findings to the public).

Foundation staff worked closely with funded communities in an advisory role to support the implementation of the H&S process, bringing established and innovative tools and practices from the community-planning field (including keypad polling, CommunityViz, Community Almanacs and charrettes). The Round 1 sites recognized that they were essentially serving as laboratories for the Foundation to test and refine its H&S-related tools, practices and principles. The Foundation's staff attempted to balance their learning interests with a desire to be supportive and responsive, often bringing new resources to help a community accomplish the tasks expected by the H&S model.

The experience of the Round 1 sites was generally positive, albeit with a smattering of challenges and disappointments. Just as importantly, the Round 1 experience generated important lessons that led to refinements and further codification of the H&S model. The Foundation's staff and Board maintained, and indeed deepened, their commitment to the model, positioning Heart & Soul as the flagship work of the Foundation. In early 2011, the Foundation released a RFP for a second round of sites to carry out the H&S model, again with financial support from the Foundation (to be matched with local sources). This RFP elicited proposals from 27 communities (some of which included multiple towns). Ten of these proposals passed an initial screening process. Of the 10 finalists, 5 communities were selected for funding:

- Essex (Town of Essex and Village of Essex Junction), Vermont;
- Gardiner, Maine;
- Cortez, Colorado;
- North Fork Valley (Towns of Paonia, Hotchkiss and Crawford), Colorado; and
- Polson, Montana.

The organizing groups within the selected communities (typically referred to as the Community Advisory Team, or CAT) began their H&S work in late 2011, with the public launches occurring in early 2012. The initial framework for the Round 2 communities (as spelled out in the RFP) was based on five core elements that tracked closely, but not exactly, with the H&S elements specified in the 2008 RFP. The revised core elements were:

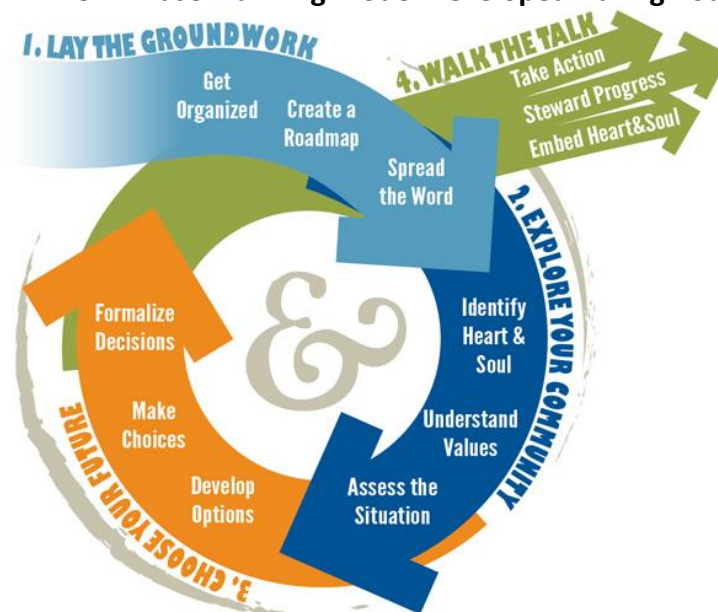
1. **Broad Community Engagement** (a commitment to broad citizen engagement demonstrated through connections to and listening to townspeople who represent the demographics of the community, including those who are often under-represented in traditional planning processes. Also requires special attention to engaging residents aged 19 and under);
2. **Identifying Shared Community Values** (using story sharing and community dialogue to identify what people value about where they live and what makes the community a special place);

3. **Using Values to Drive Decisions** (using values-based indicators, values-informed principles, etc. to inform policy, evaluate potential actions and assess the desirability of alternative scenarios for the future);
4. **Realizing the Heart & Soul Vision** (create an implementation plan to recommend specific actions that will preserve and enhance the town's heart and soul);
5. **Stewarding Community Change** (create a plan or set of practices to ensure continued implementation of heart and soul values over the long term, including leadership development, continued mechanisms for community engagement and a structure for ensuring accountability).

As with the Round 1 sites, the Foundation's staff provided extensive support to the five Round 2 sites. Each site had a dedicated member of the program staff, along with supplemental support from the communications department and Foundation leadership. In addition, the Foundation organized cross-site convenings where representatives from H&S communities learned from one another's experience, while also receiving targeted training on tools and processes relevant to their stage of H&S work. These trainings were conducted at different locations across the country (Chicago in February 2012; Austin, TX in October 2012; and Golden, CO in September 2013), and included attendees from the Round 1 sites, as well as national experts in the planning field. The consultation and training provided and/or organized by Foundation staff were supplemented with a set of web-based tools and resources that provided the local coordinators and CATs with guidance on carrying out the various steps in the H&S model.

Over the course of Round 2, the Foundation continued to develop new tools and resources to support successful implementation of the H&S model. At the same time, Foundation staff worked among themselves to clarify their expectations for how communities should go about the steps of reaching out to different segments of the community; collecting and sharing stories; identifying shared values; translating the values into policies, priorities and action steps; and sustaining the H&S way of thinking and acting over the long run. These internal deliberations led to the development of a 4-phase, 12-step model for carrying out Community Heart & Soul (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. The 4-Phase Planning Model Developed During Round 2



This new model continued to reflect the core elements delineated in the earlier descriptions of Community Heart & Soul, but added new specificity in describing what the CAT and coordinator should be aiming to accomplish as they reach out to the community, share stories, derive values, create action plans, sustain the work, etc. In addition, the “Lay the groundwork” phase was added so that Heart & Soul communities would pay more explicit attention to the organizational work that needs to be accomplished before actually engaging local residents in story-sharing and subsequent activities.

Foundation staff mapped out the planning model with even more specificity when they developed the *Community Heart & Soul Field Guide* in 2013-14. The Field Guide is intended to entice and orient people who might be interested in leading a Heart & Soul process in their community, as well as to provide ongoing guidance to those who decide to carry out the process. In addition to 4 phases and 12 steps, the Field Guide includes 33 specific tasks that communities should expect to conduct when they carry out a Heart & Soul process (see Table 1). In developing the Field Guide, the Foundation’s staff also made a few revisions to the names of the phases and steps (e.g., Phase 3 is now “Make Decisions” in place of “Choose Your Future,” Phase 4 is now “Take Action” in place of “Walk the Talk,” Step 4 is now “Gather Stories” rather than “Identify Heart & Soul”). These changes were intended to bring greater clarity to the nature of the work that the Foundation expects communities to carry out under Community Heart & Soul.

Call for Evaluation

In late 2013 (as the Round 2 sites were wrapping up the planning phase of their Heart & Soul process), the Foundation determined that there would be value in engaging an external research group to conduct an independent evaluation of the program as it had been implemented in the nine funded communities. An RFP, in November 2013, listed the six major evaluation questions:

1. **Implementation:** How successfully did the Heart & Soul communities implement their grant project and achieve project goals?
2. **Outcomes:** What are the outcomes of the Heart & Soul project? How do these outcomes compare to what the Foundation and the grantees expected?
3. **Impact:** What lasting changes have occurred with regards to participatory culture, collaboration and/or application of community values to decisions?
4. **Context:** What factors or conditions contributed to the quality of the project or inhibited progress?
5. **Theory of Change:** Did the Foundation’s basic assumptions turn out to be true and is change happening in the way we expected?
6. **Overall Strategy:** How beneficial is the Heart & Soul approach? What strategic modifications would potentially yield better outcomes?

The Wake Forest team was selected in January 2014 and began its work in February.

Table 1. Phases, Steps and Tasks identified in the Field Guide

PHASES & STEPS	TASKS			
Phase 1. Lay the Groundwork				
1. Get organized	1.1 Form a core team	1.2 Assess community readiness	1.3 Identify and confirm goals	1.4 Expand team / hire coordinator / form CAT
2. Create a roadmap	2.1 Refine the proposal	2.2. Design an engagement strategy	2.3 Create a work plan and budget	
3. Spread the word	3.1 Develop a communications strategy	3.2 Prepare communications tools and materials	3.3 Build an audience	
Phase 2. Explore Your Community				
4. Gather stories	4.1 Listen and learn (develop system for collecting stories)	4.2 Organize the data	4.3 Share the stories	
5. Identify community values	5.1 Draft a statement of community values	5.2 Review and confirm values and goals	5.3 Finalize values and celebrate	
6. Get Oriented	6.1 Examine the situation (status of each value)	6.2 Refine goals		
Phase 3: Make Decisions				
7. Develop options	7.1 Gather ideas	7.2 Turn ideas into options		
8. Make choices	8.1 Evaluate options (set priorities, choose between alternatives)	8.2 Develop recommendations	8.3 Review and confirm recommendations	
9. Formalize decisions	9.1 Craft the plan (action, rationale, objectives, tasks, timelines, resources)	9.2 Adopt the plan	9.3 Celebrate	
Phase 4: Take Action				
10. Mobilize resources	10.1 Transition leadership	10.2 Gather and align resources	10.3 Sustain commitments and momentum	
11. Follow through	11.1 Initiate actions	11.2 Monitor and adjust		
12. Cultivate Heart & Soul	12.1 Foster a participatory culture	12.1 Embed values in decision making		

2. Approach to Evaluation

Overarching Intent and Principles

The Evaluation Team understood its role as working in partnership with Foundation staff to create a comprehensive and valid assessment of how the Heart & Soul process was carried out in the Round 1 and 2 communities, and based on this information, to provide recommendations as how the model might be refined to increase its relevance and impact.

Because the Foundation views the Heart & Soul program as an innovation that will be continually refined and adapted in response to the local context and changing conditions, we brought a “developmental evaluation” approach to the evaluation task. According to its promoter Michael Quinn Patton, developmental evaluation “supports innovation development ... in complex environments.”¹

The approach is distinguished by the following principles:

- *Evaluation results provide timely feedback for development.*
- *The evaluator collaborates with those engaged in the change effort to co-create an evaluation that is useful and matches the innovation process philosophically and organizationally.*
- *The evaluator is part of the innovation team, a facilitator and learning coach, bringing evaluative thinking to the group, supportive of the innovators’ values and vision.*

Over the course of our work with the Foundation, we engaged the staff and Board in all phases of the evaluation, including specifying the evaluation questions, developing the logic model, designing the data-collection methods, and interpreting the findings. We also relied on Foundation staff as crucial informants in understanding how the Heart & Soul model had been developed and implemented.

While the Foundation’s staff and Board have been the primary clients for the evaluation, we are also conscious of the learning interests of those who are carrying out the Heart & Soul process. We view Heart & Soul communities as “learning partners” rather than simply “trial sites” to test the model. The interviews and focus groups were intended to serve as opportunities for reflection for participants and we hope that this report will be of value in guiding future work.

Key Steps in the Evaluation

Our approach to the evaluation assignment can be summarized in the following steps:

1. Engage with representatives of the Foundation to ensure that we have an **accurate understanding** of the Heart & Soul program model and that we are **aligned** on the expected outcomes of the model as well as expectations as to what the evaluation will accomplish.
2. Develop a draft **logic model** for the Heart & Soul program and engage Foundation staff and Board in conversations that lead to appropriate refinements of the logic model.
3. Guided by the logic model and the Foundation’s evaluation questions, identify the **key constructs** for assessment and develop an **evaluation design** that can assess those constructs.
4. Create **protocols for data collection** (i.e., interviews, focus groups) and gain approval from Institutional Review Board (IRB).
5. Carry out the specified methods of **data collection**.
6. **Analyze and synthesize** the data into findings that address the Foundation’s evaluation questions.

¹ Patton, M.Q. (2011). *Developmental evaluation: Applying complexity concepts to enhance innovation and use*. Guilford Press.

7. **Report** key findings and recommendations to Foundation staff and Board at specified points over the course of the evaluation.

These steps are described in further detail in the remaining sections of this chapter. Figure 2 shows the timeline over which the steps were carried out.

Figure 2. Timeline for carrying out the evaluation.

Activity	Month (2014)											
	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	
Develop shared expectations for evaluation and a common understanding of H&S model												
Review the trove of materials already created and data already collected (staff, grantees, PEER)												
Interviews with Foundation staff involved in designing and/or carrying out H&S during R1&R2												
Check in with staff and board on interim findings and refine plans for further data collection												
Develop protocols for Key Informant Interviews and Focus Groups. Obtain IRB approval												
Telephone interviews with coordinators, CAT members and other local informants												
Site visits (including 1-1 interviews, focus groups, observation, tours, <u>etc</u>)												
Analyze interview and focus group data												
Synthesize info, develop conclusions and recommendations, and write report												
Present final report to board												

Gaining Alignment on the Program and the Evaluation

The Evaluation RFP provided a clear and cogent view of what the Foundation was seeking to learn through the evaluation. The Foundation's website contains a wealth of materials describing the Community Heart & Soul program, the steps involved in carrying out the process, and the accomplishments of the different communities funded by the Foundation. Staff at the Foundation provided the Evaluation Team with all relevant material, including project-specific documents (e.g., grant proposals, progress reports, staff notes, case studies) as well as RFPs, ratings and comments on proposals from applicant communities, notes from retreats and networking meetings and strategic planning documents. These materials allowed us to gain a fuller understanding of how the Heart & Soul model evolved, the intent of the Foundation, the choice of grantees, the type of work they carried out, challenges and accomplishments, etc. Further clarity was achieved through our meetings and conference calls with Foundation staff and Board.

Based on early meetings and exchanges, the Evaluation Team submitted a revised scope of work with the following tasks:

1. Provide a more thorough, current and independent assessment of H&S **Outcomes and Impacts** than is currently available to Foundation staff and Trustees.

2. Identify **key features of the H&S model** (e.g., principles, tools, philosophy) that have allowed successful communities to achieve their outcomes.
3. Identify **key features of community context** (e.g., size of community, isolation from neighboring towns, community capacity, buy-in from local government, community divisions and/or cohesiveness) that influence the relative success of the H&S model.
4. Assess the relative **contribution of inputs beyond the H&S model** (e.g., grants, guidance from Foundation staff, additional forms of technical assistance, networking meetings), with the intent of understanding how well the model would work in the absence of financial and technical support from the Foundation.

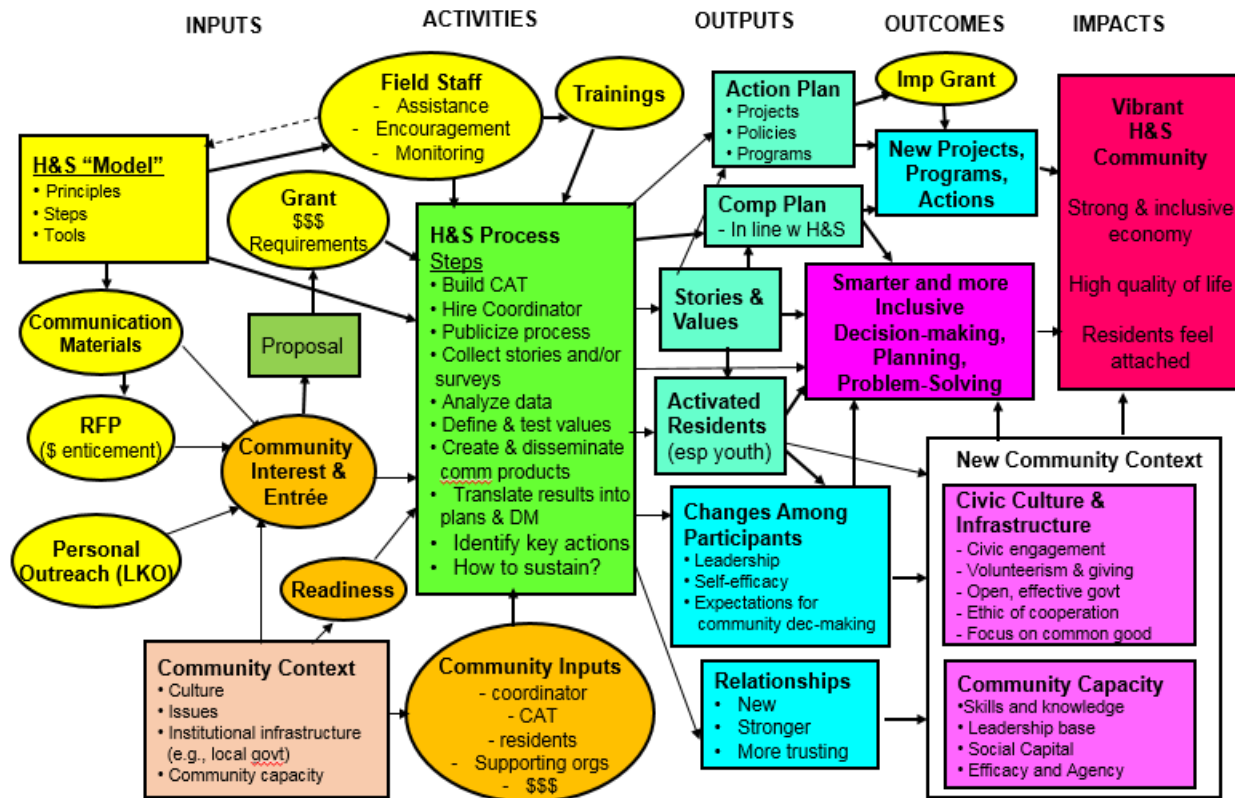
Developing the Logic Model

Logic models are standard tools of the trade that evaluators use to clarify the intentions and expectations that the client has in mind for the program to be evaluated. In general terms, a logic model is a visual map that charts out the presumed pathway(s) through which implementation of the program leads to the desired results. On the left-hand side of the map are the **Inputs** that go into carrying out the program, followed by the **Activities** that various actors are expected to carry out. Moving further to the right, the logic model shows what is expected to occur in response to those Activities, beginning with the immediate effects (**Outputs**) and then moving to later-stage **Outcomes**, and eventually to the more substantial pay-offs that might take many years to occur (**Impacts**). Arrows between Inputs, Activities, Outputs, Outcomes and Impacts represent the program designer's assumptions (or theory) as to causal pathways (i.e., what leads to what).

Logic models provide the evaluator with crucial guidance as to where to focus measurement, namely on the program designer's key expected outcomes (i.e., those that make it into the logic model) and on the intervening constructs that are viewed as crucial steps toward achieving those outcomes. In addition to guiding the evaluation, the process of developing the logic model is a clarifying exercise for the program designer. Evaluators develop logic models in collaboration with representatives of the organizations that develop, implement and/or fund the program. It is not unusual for the logic modeling process to point out "weak" program logic and/or inconsistencies in expectations and assumptions among the program's designers, managers and funders. When this occurs, additional design work or alignment is required to ensure the soundness of the program model.

In the case of Community Heart & Soul, the logic modeling process began at a meeting on February 17 with key staff members in Denver. The Evaluation Team brought to the surface the staff's assumptions regarding the work that communities would carry out when "doing Heart & Soul" as well as the pay-off from that work. Based on this conversation, supplemented by the expectations and principles uncovered in our review of various Heart & Soul materials, we generated a first-draft logic model which was presented to the Board at its March 17 meeting. Staff and Trustees provided critical comments and new information, which were incorporated into a revised version which was shared with staff and Board in subsequent conference calls and meetings, which in turn led to further refinements. Figure 3 shows the resultant logic model.

Figure 3. Community Heart & Soul Logic Model (R1 & R2)



The boxes in the logic model are color coded to reflect differences in where the inputs, activities and outcomes are expected to occur, as well as the scale and ambitiousness of the outcome. **Yellow ovals** show inputs provided by the Foundation (e.g., the Heart & Soul model, grants, resource materials, training, advice and consulting from staff). **Orange ovals** show inputs from the community carrying out the Heart & Soul process (e.g., interest, staffing, CAT, funding, participants in story-telling). The bright **green box** in the center of the figure lists the key steps that are expected to occur through the Heart & Soul process. Direct products of the process (e.g., stories, values, action plan, revised comprehensive plan) are shown in **green-blue boxes**, while later products/results (new projects, new skills and attitudes among participants, new and stronger relationships) are shown in **blue boxes**. The **purple** and **red** boxes show the bottom-line outcomes that make the process ultimately worthwhile: smarter and more inclusive decision-making and problem-solving, improved civic infrastructure and culture, increased community capacity, and ultimately a more vibrant community with a strong economy and high quality of life where residents feel a great deal of attachment.

In the course of developing this logic model, we heard somewhat different opinions as to the purpose of Heart & Soul and what a successful process would look like. (This is exceedingly common when developing a logic model.) One distinction recurred repeatedly during our conversations:

- On the one hand, going through the Heart & Soul process is expected to improve the policies, templates and mechanisms that govern and guide **land-use planning** within the community. "Improvement" here means that land-use decisions and guiding plans (e.g., comprehensive plans, downtown revitalization plans) are more aligned with the preferences, values and

priorities of local residents. This is presumed to occur through the process of story-telling and distilling those stories into underlying core values that are held in common throughout the community.

- On the other hand, Heart & Soul is also expected to have much broader and deeper effects on the way that residents think and act. In particular, the model is intended to increase civic engagement and cooperation, to bring the common good more clearly into focus for residents and local officials, and to build stronger relationships (i.e., greater social capital), especially bridging relationships that cross social and political divides. Using the language of John Parr,² this perspective presumes that the Heart & Soul model can build the **civic infrastructure** of participating communities.

Improving land-use planning was the primary impetus when the Heart & Soul model was initially developed (at which point most of the Foundation's professional staff had expertise in city, regional and environmental planning). Round 1 communities were recruited with messaging that emphasized the translation of stories to values to comprehensive plans, downtown plans and land-use decisions. Based on the experience of the Round 1 sites and evolving thinking within the Foundation, the Board began to view civic engagement as the critical pathway for improving decision making and making local government more responsive to the community's interests. As such, the Round 2 communities were presented with a more comprehensive and nuanced view of how Heart & Soul would pay off. To support the community-engagement pathway, the Foundation brought on new staff members with a community development orientation. More recently the Foundation appears to have a balanced perspective that values both the land-use planning pathway and the community-engagement pathway. There certainly is no inherent contradiction between the two pathways.

In the course of developing the logic model, it became clear that there is a third pathway through which the Heart & Soul model can improve the vitality of the community and the well-being of local residents. Namely, the process of engaging a broad cross-section of the community in a deep exploration of history, values and issues sets the stage for a **community action plan** which defines specific steps that residents can take to advance goals that align with the community's Heart & Soul values. Of the 12 steps described in the Field Guide, four of them (Steps 8, 9, 10 and 11) focus on the development and implementation of an action plan. The action plan is expected to include projects, programs and larger initiatives that directly address concerns arising through the community conversations and that are in alignment with values and visions that emerge from local residents' stories and conversations. The action plan might very well include steps to improve land-use planning and decision-making, but could also include strategies that extend into the issues of health, economic development, youth, arts and culture, poverty reduction, etc.

The logic model accommodates these three underlying purposes. On the right-hand side of the logic model, we included boxes reflecting improved land-use planning (e.g., Comp Plan in line with H&S), new action projects, and improvements in how the community functions (e.g., civic culture & infrastructure, community capacity). Each of these outcomes can logically occur as a result of the work generated through the Heart & Soul process and the personal changes that are presumed to occur among local actors who play key roles carrying out Heart & Soul.

² Parr, J. (1993). Civic infrastructure: A new approach to improving community life. *National Civic Review*, 82(2), 93-100.

Identifying Key Constructs and Choosing Evaluation Methods

The logic model, and more especially the conversations that informed the logic model, pointed to the constructs that would be important to assess through our evaluation methods. At the March 17 Board meeting, we presented and gained agreement to focus on the following six focal points for evaluation:

1. The **local context** within which the 9 Heart & Soul communities were operating (including the type of organization that was leading the effort, the level of capacity that existed within the community and among the team, the size of the community, the nature of any social/political divisions that might exist, and the reason the community wanted to do Heart & Soul, etc.);
2. The nature of the **inputs provided by the Foundation** to support the Heart & Soul process (including grant funding, trainings, individualized consultation and guidance from Foundation staff, written and web-based materials, etc.);
3. How the **Heart & Soul model was implemented** in each community (e.g., how the prescribed steps were carried out, who participated, what challenges arose);
4. The more **immediate outputs and outcomes** that resulted from the planning phase of the Heart & Soul process (e.g., values statements, action plans, specific action projects, adoption of new or revised comprehensive plans, development of downtown revitalization plans, new skills and relationships among participants);
5. The **longer term outcomes and impacts** that might be expected to emerge as the fruits of the planning phase continue to ripen and expand (e.g., outcomes of key action projects, more responsive land-use policy, new mechanisms for gathering public input, expanded civic engagement, increased community capacity, a more inclusive community culture); and
6. **Perceptions and opinions** on the merits of the Heart & Soul model and what is required to achieve success (elicited from informants within the Foundation and from individuals who have been actively engaged in carrying out Heart & Soul in their own communities).

The evaluation addressed these six focus areas through a combination of new data collection (e.g., interviews, focus groups, site visits) and review of existing documents provided by the Foundation. The majority of the new data-collection that occurred under the evaluation involved interviews and focus groups with local actors within the nine funded sites. These local informants included project coordinators, members of the Community Advisory Teams, other residents who played key roles in carrying out Heart & Soul, and elected officials other community leaders who observed the process and/or had knowledge of the local context. We purposely sought out informants with a broad range of perspectives and opinions regarding Heart & Soul. A separate round of interviews was conducted with current and former members of the Foundation's staff who were directly engaged in developing the Heart & Soul program and supporting the funded communities.

Table 2 provides an indication of which constructs were assessed by each of the evaluation methods. Cells marked with "XX" indicate that the method at the top of the column was a **primary** means of assessing the construct in the respective row. A single "X" indicates that the method was **secondary** means of assessing the construct. For any given construct, the Evaluation Team relied on multiple methods of assessment, typically with at least two methods serving as primary data sources. The one

exception is construct 5c (“Civic engagement, community capacity, culture”) which has only secondary sources of information. Assessing community-wide changes of this sort would require intensive methodologies (e.g., community surveys, ethnographic studies) that were not possible given the budget and time constraints of the evaluation.

One of the most important things to note in Table 2 is how much information was contained within the documents that the Foundation made available to the Evaluation Team. Proposals, grantee reports, staff notes and other documents described the local context, the specific activities that the funded sites carried out, the Foundation’s strategy for supporting the communities, and observations by Foundation staff and local actors on the accomplishments and challenges experienced with the process. As such, these documents were viewed as primary data sources for the first four sets of constructs: the local context for each Heart & Soul community, inputs provided by the Foundation, the manner in which the process was carried out, and the more immediate outputs of the process.

Table 2. Methods used to Assess the Key Evaluation Constructs

Construct	Method				
	Review of reports, proposals, notes, memos, etc.	Interviews & meetings w/ Foundation staff	Key Informant interviews	Focus groups	Site visits: Other meetings and observations
1. Local context & inputs	XX	X	XX	XX	XX
2. Foundation inputs	XX	XX	X	X	X
3a. How was H&S model carried out?	XX	XX	XX	XX	X
3b. What worked or not?	X	XX	XX	XX	X
4a. Outputs: Value statements	XX		XX	X	X
4b. Outputs: Action plans & projects	XX	X	XX	XX	XX
4c. Outputs: Land-use plans, codes, etc.	X	X	XX	XX	X
4d. Outputs: Participant changes	X		XX	XX	X
5a. Outcomes: Key projects	X	X	XX	XX	X
5b. Outcomes: Change in policy & decision making	X	X	XX	X	X
5c. Outcomes: Civic engagement, community capacity, culture			X	X	X
6a. Local actors' perspectives	X		XX	XX	XX
6b. Foundation's perspectives	XX	XX			

Note: XX = Method is a primary means assessing Construct. X = Method is a secondary means of assessing Construct.

Methods for the Collection of New Data

The Evaluation Team engaged a range of informants in semi-structured interviews, focus groups and more informal conversations in order to understand the assumptions, accomplishments, strengths and challenges associated with the Heart & Soul model. Table 3 shows the topics that were covered within the interviews with Foundation staff, the interviews with local informants, and the focus groups with local coordinators and CAT members. The specific questions asked during the interviews and focus groups varied as a function of the participants' area of knowledge and the flow of the conversation.

Table 3. Topics Covered in Interviews and Focus Groups

<u>Interviews with Orton Family Foundation Staff</u> • History at the Foundation (position, role, focus, arrival and departure) • Involvement in the development of the Heart & Soul model (how much influence, what perspective or experience did you bring) • Observations on the Heart & Soul (value, strengths, limitations, for which types of communities is it appropriate) • Top-level report of the Heart & Soul process within each of the communities where you were the lead staff person (highlights and lowlights of the experience, in what ways did the model work well, most important accomplishments) • Who are key people we should talk with in these communities?
<u>Key Informant interviews (Telephone and In-person)</u> • Participant's role and history in the community (e.g., employment, volunteer positions, length of residence) • Reasons for participating in Heart & Soul / Why was Heart & Soul a useful approach? • Personal experience with the Heart & Soul process (e.g., when did participation begin, roles, involvement in various aspects of the process) • How were residents engaged, stories collected, values derived? • Accomplishments and challenges during the planning phase • How appropriate are the values that came out of the process? / How have the values been received by the community? • How has the process (or the resultant values) influence decision making or policy? • Can you point to any other changes in how residents are engaged, relate to one another, etc.? • How has the process affected you personally? • Recommendations and/or comments for the Foundation
<u>Focus Groups with CAT Members, Coordinators and other Key Actors</u> • Participant background, including the role(s) played in the Heart & Soul process • Overall observations on the process (e.g., participation by different segments of the community, accomplishments, benefits, challenges) • How did the process differ from what you imagined you would be doing once you received the grant? • Have things come up through the H&S process that provide you with a clearer or deeper sense of what matters most to the people who live here? • Did the process lead to any coming together by residents as to what is most important to the community? • What were the most demanding and challenging aspects of carrying out H&S? • Did it end up being worth the effort? • How did the Foundation's staff help (or hinder) in carrying out the H&S process? • How well do you believe the community was able to meet the Foundation's expectations? • Thinking now about other communities that are interested in doing H&S, what would you tell them? • In your opinion, is it possible for most towns to carry out the H&S process without financial support and assistance from outside groups? • What else would you like us to know about your experience with H&S process?

The first set of interviews was carried out with six members of the Foundation's staff who were directly involved in developing the model and supporting the funded communities. These interviews were conducted by telephone and generally lasted between 60-90 minutes. Our intent with these interviews was to gain a more complete historical account of how the Heart & Soul had developed over the years, as well as to understand how the different staff members thought about the model, what they hoped would be accomplished and how they supported their respective communities. The staff also identified influential actors within their communities who would serve as key informants for the Evaluation Team.

Interviews with local informants were conducted both by telephone and in-person. For most of the funded communities, we began by interviewing the coordinator by telephone and probing on all aspects of the Heart & Soul process (e.g., impetus, formation of the CAT, hiring of the coordinator, outreach, story-telling, values-derivation, products generated from the process, how the process was received by the community, allies and critics, accomplishments and challenges, personal impacts). We also asked for recommendations on whom else we should interview, include in a focus group, or talk with informally. These interviews generally lasted 90 minutes.

Based on recommendations from the coordinator and Foundation staff, we typically contacted 4-6 additional local informants to request a telephone interview. These interviews were often (but not always) shorter in length, depending on how much knowledge the interviewee possessed on the various aspects of the process. In addition to interviewing local informants by telephone, we conducted site visits where we could carry out additional interviews and one or two focus groups. The in-person interviews were similar in content to the telephone interviews, although in practice tended to hone in on more focused aspects of the Heart & Soul process. When interviewing critics, we generally adopted a more open-ended approach to eliciting the interviewee's perspective.

Focus groups were generally made up of members of the Community Advisory Teams, along with the coordinator and possibly a couple additional participants who had strong knowledge of the process. Invariably participants were well-acquainted with one another and moved quickly and easily into the topics we raised for discussion. We heard on multiple occasions that the focus group had served as a useful opportunity for participants to take a step back and reflect on the process, what had been accomplished, and next steps.

The site visits also provided the Evaluation Team with an opportunity to tour the Heart & Soul communities, observe projects or facilities that were connected to Heart & Soul, and to gain a sense of local politics and social issues that might have affected the process. We also asked around to see how the Heart & Soul project was regarded in the community and, more particularly, how well-known the project was.

Participation by Local Informants

Between the telephone interviews and the site visits, the Evaluation Team interacted with 125 participants from the nine communities. This included 78 individuals who were interviewed either by telephone or in-person (or both), and another 47 people who participated in a focus group or an informal conversation. Across the nine communities, the number of participants varied from 7 to 24. Table 4 shows the exact number of participants by modality and by site.

Table 4. Number of Local Actors Participating in the Evaluation

Site	Interviews			Focus Groups (# groups)	Informal Meetings, Tours, etc.	Total Participants*
	Total	Telephone	In-Person			
Round 1						
Biddeford, ME	7	5	5	10 (1)	2 (2)	13
Damariscotta, ME	7	7	0	0	0	7
Golden, CO	3	0	3	9 (1)	1	9
Victor, ID	4	4	1	8 (2)	0	9
Round 2						
Essex, VT	9	5	5	8 (1)	1	12
Gardiner, ME	15	7	9	9 (1)	1 (2)	21
Cortez, CO	10	5	7	9 (1)	2 (4)	15
North Fork Valley, CO	15	6	11	5 (1)	2 (5)	16
Polson, MT	9	4	7	20 (2)	2 (2)	24
TOTAL	78**	42**	47**	78 (10)	17	125**

*Some individuals participated in more than one activity; this number represents unique participations.

**One individual interviewed both by phone and in-person provided data on two H&S communities, so Total is 1 less than column sum.

One pattern apparent from Table 4 is that we conducted more interviews with informants from the Round 2 communities than from the Round 1 communities. This difference reflected the fact that going into the evaluation, much less was known about how the Heart & Soul process had played out within the Round 2 communities than within the Round 1 communities. Indeed, the Round 2 communities were still in Phases 3 and 4 of the Heart & Soul process when we conducted the interviews and focus groups, so the story was still emerging. As such, we intentionally focused more of our data-collection resources on the Round 2 sites than on the Round 1 sites.

Site visits were conducted with all five of the Round 2 communities and three of the four Round 1 communities (all except Damariscotta). In our original proposal for the evaluation, we proposed doing site visits only to the Round 2 communities. Through subsequent discussion with the Foundation's staff and Board liaison, we revised our plans to include site visits to all nine communities, but ended up doing eight site visits instead.

Data Analysis and Reporting

Key interviews (e.g., with coordinators) and focus groups were transcribed. For all others, the interviewers took notes during the interview. These transcripts and notes were analyzed qualitatively to gain a full understanding of how each community carried out the Heart & Soul model, as well as to identify cross-cutting themes, patterns and recommendations.

3. Findings

This chapter summarizes key findings derived from our analysis of the various forms of data we collected and/or reviewed through the evaluation. We have organized the findings into seven major sections:

1. The community and organizational context within which the nine funded Heart & Soul projects were carried out;
2. The purpose(s) that the sponsoring groups, CAT members and coordinators had in mind as they embarked on Heart & Soul;
3. Trends, accomplishments and challenges in how the essential steps in the model were implemented;
4. Initial outcomes and setting the stage for longer-term impacts;
5. The costs that communities incurred in carrying out the model;
6. Community-level factors that contributed or inhibited successful implementation; and
7. The effect of the Foundation's resources and staff on implementation.

The final chapter will build on these findings to provide an overall assessment of the merits of the Heart & Soul model and a set of recommendations for actions on the part of the Foundation and local actors that can increase prospects for a smooth process and achievement of the community's goals.

Local Context

It became quickly apparent to the Evaluation Team that the Heart & Soul process had a different form, look, and feel across the nine different demonstration communities. Thus to evaluate the process and outcomes associated with the Heart & Soul model, it was crucial to assess the different contexts within which the model was carried out.

Community context. Drawing on the grant proposals, case study reports and other documents provided by the Foundation, we created a grid summarizing the key characteristics of the nine funded sites (see Table 5). For each site, this table shows the specific communities that were directly involved in the Heart & Soul process, the number of residents within this catchment area, and a thumbnail description of the local geography, economy and population.

Most of the communities are in rural settings, but Golden is a suburb of Denver. Even among the rural sites, some are within 30 minutes of a city while others (e.g., Victor, Polson, North Fork Valley, Cortez) are hours away. The New England communities date back hundreds of years and have economies based on manufacturing (e.g., textiles, computers) and fishing, while the Rocky Mountain communities rely on mining, ranching and tourism. Residents of all four of the New England communities as well as two of the Rocky Mountain communities (Victor and North Fork Valley) are largely of European descent (although with growing numbers of new immigrants), while the other three Rocky Mountain communities (Golden, Cortez and Polson) have significant populations of Hispanics and Native Americans. Cortez and Polson are situated either adjacent to or on Indian Reservations.

The issues and pressures facing each community were in some ways unique, but also reflective of larger trends within towns and small cities in New England and the Rocky Mountain West. These included finding a balance between development and preserving the natural environment, developing new economies, maintaining the vitality of downtown businesses, retaining young people, ensuring access to health care, remedying the ill effects of poverty, creating and maintaining high-quality schools, and promoting arts and culture.

Table 5. Characterization of the Nine Demonstration Communities

Rd.	Site	Community(ies) Participating in Heart & Soul	State	Pop. (2010)	Community Character
1	Biddeford	Biddeford (focus on downtown)	Maine	21,277	Situated in coastal Southern Maine; within the City's boundaries lie undeveloped farmland and forest areas, sandy beaches, a stretch of the Saco River and a historic urban core; traditional New England mill town, with two million square feet of historic textile mill buildings, old brick commercial façades and a dense housing stock. Large Franco-American population. "Main Street" community.
1	Damariscotta	Damariscotta	Maine	2,218	Located on salt water near the head of the Damariscotta River estuary, twelve miles from the open ocean, a key focal point for midcoast Maine residents and visitors. As a service center to Bristol, South Bristol, Newcastle, Bremen, Pemaquid, Edgecomb, Alna, and Nobleboro, Damariscotta is a major provider of area jobs.
1	Golden	Golden	Colorado	18,867	Freestanding "Old West" community on the western limits of the Denver metropolitan area, 25 minutes from downtown and surrounded by mesas and foothill. Home of Coors Brewery, which draws water from Clear Creek running through center of town. Population grew more than 30% between 1990-2000, and 10% between 2000 and 2010, but will likely slow in the coming years unless the city limits are expanded.
1	Victor	Victor	Idaho	1,928	Flat landscape with farmland surrounded by Rocky Mountains; population doubled from 2000 to 2010 with many new subdivisions and development proposals in tow; demographic shifts with transitions from agriculture to a real estate and recreation economy. Farmers and ranchers have a long history in the region. Population is divided between members of Church of Latter-Day Saints and non-members, and there is a growing Hispanic community.
2	Essex	Town of Essex and Village of Essex Junction	Vermont	19,587	Picturesque Vermont community on the outskirts of Burlington metropolitan area. Home to a large IBM facility built in the 1950s and slated for downsizing and possible sale. The Village of Essex Junction is located within the Town of Essex. Governing boards, committees, and municipal services coordinate to varying degrees. For more than 50 years, residents of the two municipalities have debated the merits of merging or separating.
2	Gardiner	Gardiner	Maine	5,792	Sits within ten miles of the State Capitol and is within the second largest retail and labor market in Maine. Following the decline of manufacturing and Gardiner's stature as a regional service center, the City became a bedroom community for state employees and shipbuilders. Home to a historic downtown district, waterfront boardwalk and marina, a rural and sporting culture. "Main Street" community.
2	Cortez	Cortez	Colorado	8,487	Cortez is surrounded by snow-capped mountains, evergreen forests, south sloping upland plateaus, high desert sage fields, dry land farms, prehistoric and historic cultural sites, and sandstone canyons. It has become a shopping destination for many of the neighboring communities, including members of the Ute Mountain Ute and Navajo tribes.
2	North Fork Valley	Paonia, Hotchkiss and Crawford, plus surrounding rural region	Colorado	7,000	North Fork of the Gunnison River Valley is located in Western CO in Delta County. Bordered by the West Elk Mountains and the Grand Mesa, it is a beautiful landscape of irrigated farms and orchards, ranches, riparian and mountain wildlife areas, and semi-arid desert. Agriculture, animal husbandry, and coal mining have been part of the community's historical identity and a primary way of earning a living.
2	Polson	Polson	Montana	5,000	Tourist and retiree community located on the south shore of Flathead Lake at the north end of the Mission Valley. Polson is located on the Flathead Indian Reservation. Land for the town and private homes was acquired in early 1900s through homesteading of lands previously held by the Salish and Kootenai tribes.

While the nine communities shared a number of priorities, they also were quite different in their character and capacity. The following factors can serve as yardsticks for observing these differences:

- Local geography, topography, natural resources and climate (especially when comparing the New England communities to those in the Rocky Mountain West);
- Current and historical economic base (e.g., manufacturing, agriculture, mining, service center, forestry, recreation)
- Whether or not the community is a tourist destination
- Distance from a major city (e.g., Golden vs. Polson)
- Population size
- Level of population growth in recent years
- Age distribution of population (especially % school-aged and % retirees)
- Level of education among adult population
- Average household income and wealth
- Disparity in income/wealth across different segments of the community
- Degree of ethnic diversity (e.g., very little in Essex, substantial in Cortez)
- Key sub-populations (e.g., Hispanic, Native American, Mormon, Franco-American, college students, part-year residents, artists)
- Politics and ideology
- Inter-jurisdictional relationships among local governments and residents

This list is interesting not only because it demonstrates how the nine communities differ from one another, but because these factors turned out to be important in determining why a community chose to do Heart & Soul, how the process unfolded and the particular values that emerged. For example it was harder to recruit skilled CAT members and coordinators in less populated, less educated, more blue-collar communities located far from metro areas. Also, communities with more inequity in wealth and/or more ethnic and racial diversity faced greater challenges in engaging a representative group of residents in story-telling exercises, forums and meetings. In addition communities with strong divisions between conservatives and liberals/progressives found it more challenging to define commonly shared values. Interestingly, while the nine communities had different levels of population growth and in-migration, each one could point to at least some tension between newcomers and old-timers (although different communities had very different thresholds for how long one needed to live in a community to be considered a “local”).

Organizational context. The Heart & Soul process was influenced not just by the nature of the community context, but also the organizational structure through which the project was implemented and managed. In its request for proposals for Heart & Soul funding, the Foundation required that the applicant be either a local government entity or a non-profit organization working in partnership with local government. This flexibility allowed for two distinct models for project governance: 1) Heart & Soul directly managed by a municipal agency (typically the planning department), and 2) Heart & Soul managed by a group of concerned citizens with advice and support from local government.

Three communities (Golden, Cortez and Gardiner) specified that the City’s planning department would manage the Heart & Soul process, while the other six vested responsibility in a non-profit organization. Over time, it became clear that the second model actually consisted of two distinct sub-models: 2a) local government acted as a **strong** partner to the managing non-profit (Damariscotta and Victor), and 2b) local government acted as a **secondary** partner to the managing non-profit (Biddeford, Essex, North Fork Valley and Polson). In the two “strong partner” arrangements, local government officials were

involved in a formal capacity (the mayor and City staff helped coordinate the process in Victor, while an advisory group appointed by the Town's Select Board served as the CAT in Damariscotta). By contrast, in the "secondary partner" arrangements, the local town's commitment to the process was more tentative and tenuous, and elected officials and municipal staff participated more as individuals than as official representatives of local government. In the case of North Fork Valley, the Town Council of one of the "participating towns" (Crawford) withdrew its support after the grant was awarded.

More specific details on each site's project governance are shown in Table 6. This table also indicates that even though the Gardiner project was technically managed by municipal government, the original project manager, who was also central to submitting the proposal, withdrew from the project midway through. We emphasize these different models of project governance because this difference turned out to have an important impact on how the Heart & Soul process was viewed within the local community, as well as the degree to which the values could be translated into policy (see **Facilitators and Inhibitors of Success** section below).

Table 6. Project Governance

Rd.	Site	Governance Model	Fiscal Agent	Who did coordinator work for?	Role of local government(s)
1	Golden	Town government manages the process	City of Golden	City of Golden	Process was run by City Planning Department
2	Cortez	Town government manages the process	City of Cortez	City of Cortez	Process was run by City Planning Department
2	Gardiner	Town is lead agency, but not champion	City of Gardiner	City of Gardiner	Town of Gardiner initiated the process, but involvement decreased over time. Changed.
1	Damariscotta	Community organization is lead / Town is strong partner	Damariscotta Planning Advisory Committee	Friends of Midcoast Maine	Elected officials and staff from Town of Damariscotta were actively engaged. DPAC was a committee created by Board of Selectmen.
1	Victor	Community organization is lead / Town is strong partner	Envision Victor (non-profit organization) formed to carry out H&S	Envision Victor	Mayor and staff from Town of Victor were supportive and engaged.
1	Biddeford	Community organization is lead / Town is secondary partner	Heart of Biddeford (Main Street organization)	Heart of Biddeford	Town of Biddeford provided moderate support
2	Essex	Community organization is lead / Town is secondary partner	Heart and Soul of Essex, Inc. (non-profit organization) formed to carry out H&S	Independent consultants who were town residents	Staff and elected officials from Town of Essex and Village of Essex Junction were members of CAT, but little formal buy-in from government officials.
2	North Fork Valley	Community organization is lead / Town is secondary partner	Delta County Economic Development	Independent consultants who were town residents	Towns of Paonia, Hotchkiss and Crawford endorsed the proposal, but only a few local officials directly supported the process. Town of Crawford withdrew its support.. Mayor and Town Clerk of Paonia were strong supporters, but Town Council voted against posting values.
2	Polson	Community organization is lead / Town is secondary partner	Greater Polson Community Foundation	Independent consultants who were town residents	Mayor and some staff were actively engaged on CAT, but support was more individual than official.

Purpose and Motivation

Harkening back to the earlier discussion of the Heart & Soul logic model (Figure 3), different communities specified different intents in their proposal to the Foundation. The Round 1 communities were primarily interested in using an intentional and inclusive community process to guide a land-use plan – either a plan for revitalizing downtown (Biddeford, Victor and Damariscotta), a comprehensive plan (Golden), or a new zoning code (Damariscotta). Two of the Round 2 communities (Cortez and Gardiner) were also in the process of revising their comprehensive plans, but the other three communities in Round 2 had an eclectic mix of purposes.

- The Community Foundation of Greater Polson applied for a Heart & Soul grant with the intent that the process would generate community-wide values and priorities that could be used to guide its grantmaking decisions and to generate more community impact.
- The organizers of the North Fork Valley effort also were focused on identifying shared values and priorities, with the ultimate intent of spurring those forms of economic development that would preserve the environmental and social assets of the Valley.
- The Essex project was designed to engage residents from both the Town of Essex and the Village of Essex Junction in a process of mutual discovery to identify shared values and interests, which in turn would increase coordination, alignment and partnering between the Town and the Village.

This description of each community's intent for Heart & Soul focuses on the primary reason that the organizers stated in their applications. However, these primary reasons do not reflect the full story. Each community actually had multiple motivations in mind when they decided to initiate Heart & Soul (sometimes leading to inconsistent expectations among different stakeholders). We identified seven categories of motivation at work across the nine communities: 1) inform a new or revised plan for downtown revitalization; 2) guide local government in revising its comprehensive plan and/or its zoning code; 3) elicit public input that can be used to set budgets and/or to prioritize resource allocation; 4) gather community values and priorities that can serve more generally as input for plans, policies and other decisions; 5) strategic planning to identify priorities and action steps that different community institutions; 6) entice residents to engage more actively in civic affairs; and 7) build new relations and trust, especially between groups that have historically be divided.

Table 7 presents our analysis of which of these motivations were at work within each of the nine funded communities. Purposes marked with a "XX" are viewed as primary motivations among those who organized the Heart & Soul effort, while purposes with a "X" are secondary or specific to only some of the organizers. In our view, all nine communities were at least somewhat motivated by purposes 4, 5 and 6 (i.e., guiding policy and/or land-use planning, identifying strategic priorities and action steps, and increasing civic engagement).

The fact that multiple purposes are checked in each column points to a dilemma that we heard in many Heart & Soul communities, especially the Round 2 communities. With so many different motivations at work, there was often at least some confusion as to what the Heart & Soul process was "all about." This led to unclear messaging when creating communications materials to describe the program to the general public. Even among the CAT, different members were not necessarily at the table for the same reason. Some of our more interesting exchanges in the focus groups occurred when we asked the question, "What is Heart & Soul good for?" Participants were not at a loss for responses, but the conversation sometimes pointed out major distinctions in orientation that had been operating within the CAT over the course of the project.

Table 7. Most Important Purposes for Embarking on Heart & Soul

PURPOSE	SITE								
	Biddeford	Damariscotta	Golden	Victor	Essex	Gardiner	Cortez	North Fork Valley	Polson
1) Inform new or revised plan for downtown revitalization	XX	XX		XX					
2) Guide revisions to comprehensive plan and/or zoning code (explicit next step)		XX - zoning code	XX - comp plan			XX - comp plan	XX - comp plan		
3) Set budget priorities			X - for city government						XX - for community foundation
4) More general effort to gather community input to guide plans, policies, decisions, etc.	X	X	X	XX	X	X	X	XX	X
5) Identify strategic priorities and action steps for community as a whole	X	X	X	X	XX	X	X	XX	X
6) Increase civic engagement	X	X	XX	X	X	X	XX	X	XX
7) Build relationships and/or trust			X - between city govt and residents	X - between Mormons and non-Mormons, newcomers and old-timers	XX - between Town and Village		X - between Anglos, Hispanics, Navajo and Utes	X - between newcomers and old-timers	X - between Tribal members and non-members

Note: XX = Purpose was of primary importance for community. X = Purpose was of secondary importance.

Implementation of the Heart & Soul Model

As mentioned in the Introduction, the Heart & Soul model has evolved in important ways since its initial characterization in the Round 1 RFP. The Round 2 communities were presented with a more “evolved” and more specific version of the model (although not as specific and detailed as is delineated in the Field Guide). Given the variation between Rounds 1 and 2 in the nature of the model and in the guidance and training provided by Foundation staff, the Evaluation Team did not have a fixed frame of reference for evaluating the model’s implementation. Rather than relying on either the Round 1 version, the Round 2 version or the Field Guide version of the Heart & Soul model, we evaluated implementation according to the model’s more stable expectations. In particular, we identified the following five “essential steps” of Heart & Soul which appear to us to be emphasized in all three versions of the model:

1. Engage all segments of the community in conversations about what matters most;
2. Elicit stories and other forms of data that together paint a picture of the community’s history, priorities and aspirations;
3. Analyze the stories and other data to identify a set of core values that: a) reflect a shared view of what matters most, and b) are clear enough and discriminating enough that they have the potential to guide future planning and decision making;
4. Apply those values in ways that actually inform planning and decision making; and
5. Identify high-leverage action steps that advance the shared values.

This section of the report presents our findings on how the nine participating communities carried out these five essential steps.

Summary assessment. By the time they had completed their grants with the Foundation, each of the nine funded communities had carried out all the essential activities that the Foundation had specified in the respective RFP. However this does not mean that the process looked the same in each of the Round 1 sites or in each of the Round 2 sites. Building on the guidance and tools supplied by the Foundation, each site developed its own distinctive strategy for reaching out to the community, sharing stories, deriving values, creating a vision, comparing alternatives, reporting findings and engaging with key stakeholders. To some extent, these idiosyncrasies reflected the backgrounds and skill sets of each community’s coordinator, CAT and sponsoring organizations. But the differences in how Heart & Soul was implemented also stem from variation in what each community ultimately wanted to accomplish with the process.

Community outreach and communication. In keeping with the program model’s requirement to reach broadly and deeply into the community to attract participants, the nine funded communities each employed a diverse mix of strategies for communicating the goals of Heart & Soul and for inviting residents to attend project-related events and to contribute their stories and ideas.

In virtually all communities, the communications strategy included stories and announcements in the local newspaper and at least one local radio station. In some communities, a newspaper and/or radio station signed on as a project partner and provided ongoing coverage of events, proceedings and results. The “Community Radio” stations in Cortez (KJSD) and North Fork Valley (KVNF) were particularly strong supporters of the local Heart & Soul projects. Television coverage was less common across the nine communities because they are generally far from the closest station and not a major portion of any station’s market.

In addition to getting the word out through local media, the nine projects developed direct communication mechanisms for reaching into their communities. Most communities used the following a combination of the following approaches:

- Paid or pro-bono announcements placed in local newspapers, local radio stations and (if available) local television stations;
- Posters, flyers and banners posted at local businesses, schools, government offices, public spaces, etc.;
- Mass mailings of flyers, postcards, surveys, etc.;
- Sending flyers home with students;
- Newsletters (mailed or emailed);
- Email blasts;
- Linkage to the Orton Family Foundation's website, with a dedicated page for each community; and
- Creation of a Facebook page for the local project.

In addition to these formal approaches to communication, all projects relied heavily on word of mouth to spread information throughout various networks. In practice, this approach was among the most powerful, not only in reaching people, but in providing them with the larger context of what Heart & Soul was all about, as well as some personal assurance that the project is useful and appropriate for the community – and thus something worth participating in.

Some projects were particularly ambitious and/or creative with their communications approaches. For example, the Golden project invited residents to block meetings and other community events by having grocery stores place invitations in shopping bags and pizza restaurants attach invitations to pizza boxes. Invitations were also delivered door to door in targeted neighborhoods. The North Fork Valley project partnered with a local brewery (Revolution Brewing) to market a Heart & Soul branded beer (Heart & Soul Lovett or Leave It IPA). In keeping with the principles of Heart & Soul, the Lovett or Leave It IPA was made with only local ingredients and was brewed using bicycle energy. Coasters modeled after the label were distributed throughout the valley.

In the process of developing their communications materials, the projects worked with local graphic designers to create their own Heart & Soul logo and imagery. This work played a key role in branding the local effort and linking it to the Foundation's larger Heart & Soul initiative.

One challenge that surfaced for most projects as they developed their communications strategy was lack of clarity and/or agreement about the purpose of Heart & Soul. This ambiguity pertained not so much to the specific steps that needed to be carried out, as the CATs and coordinators were generally quite clear on the activities required by the Heart & Soul model. Instead, the project leaders were sometimes fuzzy on how the community's input would translate into concrete actions or pay off in terms of solving specific problems. We observed more uncertainty among the Round 2 communities where the overarching purpose typically extended well beyond guiding a comprehensive plan or a downtown revitalization plan.

Engaging different segments of the community. In all nine of the projects, hundreds of residents turned out for community gatherings, conversations, story-sharing methods, forums, festivals, pop-up coffee shops and a variety of other events. Some communities reached additional hundreds (and even

thousands) of residents through surveys and questionnaires. However, the large numbers did not always translate into full representation of the community's demographics.

The degree to which a project was able to reach all segments of the community depended on the comprehensiveness of its communications strategy, the breadth of people involved in carrying out the project (broader groups had access to more complete social networks), and the sensitivity of the CAT and coordinator to ethnic, cultural and class distinctions within the community. Nearly all projects encountered at least some challenge in reaching and connecting with segments of the population that were not well represented on the CAT, especially ethnic minorities, low income families, and residents who are disconnected from civic life because of job requirements or a desire to be left alone.

Across the board, we heard from project leaders that they had difficulty recruiting the following segments of the community:

- Low-income residents
- Working class families
- Families with young children
- Racial and ethnic minorities (Hispanics, Native Americans)
- Long-time residents resistant to change
- More individualistic, less community-minded residents

Interviewees and focus group participants pointed to a number of reasons why these groups were difficult to engage. In communities with a significant Hispanic population (e.g. Cortez, Victor), interviewees pointed to language barriers, concern about immigration status, mistrust of public processes and limited connectedness to the community (especially for recent arrivals). Lower-income residents (especially those working multiple jobs) were viewed as being too focused on their own personal and family needs to have time to engage in civic-oriented activities. And even if they were interested in a community-building process, they may have found the Heart & Soul process to be too abstract and indirect of a method for addressing the issues that most directly affected them (e.g., poverty, joblessness, homelessness, lack of health care). Some interviewees critiqued that Heart & Soul events and gatherings as overly "fun and feel-good," rather than exploring the deeper issues and more acute problems affecting the community (especially issues affecting low-income and/or minority residents).

Although all projects faced at least some degree of challenge in engaging low-income residents and people of color, we did hear about some notable successes. The Cortez project was able to engage Hispanic residents in at least some community forums through personal outreach on the part of a Hispanic member of the CAT. With her guidance, the Heart & Soul project was able to sponsor events that were particularly meaningful and informative to the Hispanic population (e.g., a forum covering the new Colorado driver's license law). The Cortez project also had some success in reaching Hispanic residents by organizing meetings and events in relevant neighborhoods (e.g., Diece Seis de Septiembre block party). In a similar vein, the Golden project was quite intentional reaching out to specific neighborhoods in order to engage low-income residents who had previously felt disenfranchised from government decision making.

Two communities sought to engage Native Americans living either in town or on a nearby reservation. Cortez is adjacent to the Ute Mountain Ute reservation (to the south) and the Navajo reservation (to the west), while Polson sits on the Flathead reservation which is home to the Consolidated Salish and

Kootenai Tribe. Both towns have long and complex histories involving treaty rights and conflicts between Natives and non-Natives. The Heart & Soul projects in Cortez and Polson sought to involve tribal members as advisors or CAT members, but in each case the project's connection to the local Native community has been tenuous. Members of the Ute and Navajo nations did not participate to a significant degree in the Cortez project's story-sharing and related community events, largely because the process was outside the tribes' social, cultural and political norms. The same was true in Polson with the Salish and Kootenai Tribes. However, in both communities, the project was able to engage constructively with tribal government with regard to "projects where the Tribe had a direct interest.

In a very different vein, the projects faced at least some difficulty in engaging residents with more conservative politics and ideologies. In virtually every site, Heart & Soul was viewed as a "progressive" project because of its goal of values-based planning, community-informed policy making and community change. Except in the case of the three projects run out of local government, the people leading Heart & Soul projects were generally viewed as liberals or progressives. This caused suspicion among those with conservative views, especially on the topics of planning, zoning and other forms of government decision making that might potentially infringe on individual property rights. These residents tend to be suspicious of any sort of community planning process that aims to influence policy. The Heart & Soul process attracted even greater scrutiny and skepticism because of the emphasis on land-use planning.

This dynamic was particularly pronounced in two of the Rocky Mountain sites – North Fork Valley, Colorado, and Polson, Montana. Activists opposed to the principle of "sustainable development" (as defined in the United Nation's *Agenda 21* document) sought to block these two Heart & Soul efforts under the premise that the process was promoting a form of communitarian decision making that would restrict land use and undermine property rights. In both communities, opponents wrote repeated letters to the editor of the local newspapers and voiced their objections at public meetings. Their actions distracted attention away from the process and took a personal toll on the project leaders.

Engaging youth. The Foundation placed special emphasis on engaging young people in the process of gathering stories and other input. All of the projects could point to at least one approach that succeeded along these lines, including:

- the inter-generational interview projects in North Fork Valley and Biddeford;
- an additional project in Essex where young people produced their own video;
- a project in Gardiner where young people from the local Boys & Girls Club toured the community, documented issues that needed attention, and made a presentation to the Town Council;
- a project in Golden where youth recorded their own stories as well as the stories of other residents;
- a kids' storytelling camp in Victor;
- the Youth World Café in Polson which asked teens what they love about Polson;
- a survey conducted among students at Paonia High School in the North Fork Valley, Lincoln Academy in Damariscotta, and in Cortez; and
- encouraging boards of local organizations to create trustee positions specifically designated for youth in Cortez.

Virtually all the projects made explicit attempts to engage young people in the community input process, as well as more generally as project advisors and ambassadors. While most projects can point

to at least some success along these lines, nearly all reported that they struggled to engage a broad cross-section of youth in meaningful ways.

Methods for eliciting stories and other community input. The heart of the Heart & Soul process is the step of engaging a broad cross-section of local residents in story-sharing and other information-gathering that brings to the surface “what matters most” to the community. This step is where all nine communities spent the most time, effort and resources. They employed a wide range of strategies, some of which involved 1-1 interviews and others of which took place in either small groups or open community settings. The projects demonstrated high levels of creativity in developing approaches such as storytelling booths at local festivals (Biddeford and North Fork Valley), kiosks in public venues that allowed residents to spontaneously record their perspectives (Polson and Victor), inter-generational interview projects in Biddeford and North Fork Valley, and photo booths and pop-up coffee shops in Essex. Table 8 summarizes each community’s approach based on information to the Evaluation Team.

Our categorization of community-input methods in Table 8 shows that there is diversity not only in the modality for engaging residents, but also in the underlying purpose of the interaction. The first block of approaches all involve the collection of individual stories or perspectives – through recorded interviews, self-directed storytelling, sharing at a booth or kiosk, or an arts-based approach. All but one of the projects conducted at least one strategy for collecting individualized stories and input. Most of these individualized interactions were facilitated by project volunteers, although the coordinators were typically overseeing the process and conducting at least some interviews. The Biddeford project partnered with the Salt Institute to conduct, transcribe and summarize the individual interviews. In North Fork Valley, a local radio station – KVNf – was already developing the Pass the Mic project in which high-school and middle-school students would act as reporters interviewing a diverse sample of adults in the valley; this became a central means of gathering input for the Heart & Soul project.

In addition to collecting stories and input in an individualized fashion, all the projects set up forums where residents could share stories and perspectives with one another. The most common approach involved potlucks or other story-sharing events that took place in private homes. These gatherings sought to bring together residents who didn’t necessarily know one another. The second approach involved more open community gatherings or block parties, such as occurred at Pierre’s Playhouse in Victor. This second approach to gathering community input had the advantage that residents came not only as story-tellers but also as listeners. In other words, the process supported Heart & Soul’s intended outcomes not only by collecting data to translate into values and reports, but also by providing an opportunity for residents to build relationships and to gain a broader appreciation of the different people who live in the community.

Table 8. Methods used to Collect Stories and Other Community Input

Approach	Round 1 sites				Round 2 sites					Total
	Biddeford	Damarisc.	Golden	Victor	Essex	Gardiner	Cortez	North Fork Valley	Polson	
<i>Individualized stories, portraits, etc.</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	9
1-1 interviews	X	X	X	X		X	X	X		7
Digital storytelling			X					X		2
Booth at local fair or festival	X		X		X		X	X		4
Kiosk or photo booth	X			X	X			X	X	5
Arts-based expression			X		X			X		3
<i>Sharing of stories and perspectives in group settings</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	9
Story circles or focused dinner conversations	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	7
Community story gatherings or block parties			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	7
<i>Public input on community issues, decisions or policy</i>		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	7
Community Forums or Neighborhood meetings		X	X		X		X	X		5
Focus Groups			X				X	X		3
Written or email surveys				X	X			X	X	4

The third category of approaches is less about story sharing and more about gathering residents' perspectives and opinions on local issues and how the community needs to change. Six of the nine projects used either community forums, neighborhood meetings, focus groups or surveys to elicit public input along these lines.

Across these different modalities, the nine projects were able to engage hundreds, and in some cases thousands, of residents in the Heart & Soul process. Not surprisingly, the surveys used in Victor and North Fork Valley allowed the greatest reach, in each case eliciting responses from over 2000 residents. More time-intensive approaches such as individual interviews necessarily engaged only a limited number of residents, but projects were generally quite strategic in ensuring that a diverse mix of people were interviewed. Story-sharing groups (e.g., the theatre event in North Fork Valley) tended to provide the most efficient means of directly engaging large numbers of residents in a meaningful manner.

The story-sharing process and community gatherings attracted a wide range of local residents and generated largely positive feedback from participants. However some informants criticized the approach as overly "fun and feel-good," without a corresponding examination of the deeper issues and more acute problems affecting the community (especially issues affecting low-income and/or minority residents).

Deriving values from community stories and input. One of the most technically challenging aspects of the Heart & Soul process is to distill all the stories, conversations and other community input into a cogent set of statements that validly reflects local residents' perspective of what matters most about their community. According to the Field Guide, identifying community values (Step 5) is "the cornerstone of Community Heart & Soul... These statements provide a starting point for discussing issues, opportunities and ideas for the future" (p. 33). This step was extremely time-consuming in all communities and many projects reported that they had trouble knowing how to carry it out.

Deriving value statements from stories and meeting notes is a complex exercise in qualitative data analysis. The Heart & Soul model adds a layer of complexity to this already challenging task by calling for the analysis to be not only transparent but also participatory. Cortez and Polson were able to engage large numbers of residents in the process of distilling values from the voluminous text data that had been gathered during the storytelling step. Each of these two projects hosted community summits where values statements were drafted. Golden also held 14 "listening sessions" where residents reviewed 360-plus stories and provided some initial thoughts on the underlying values reflected in those stories.

In most of the other communities, the distillation process was performed in-house by the coordinator and/or a sub-group of the CAT. In some projects, one person skilled in qualitative analysis "took care" of this step, while in other cases, a committee would work together on the analysis. In the Essex project, for example, the Neighborhood Conversations team used a process of individual reflection and group discussion to identify a set of draft values, which were then discussed and revised with the full CAT.

While only a minority of the projects directly engaged a large number of residents in the process of deriving values from the stories, the vast majority did subject the draft values to community input. Most of the projects used either a survey or community meetings (or both) to gain feedback on the draft values. Biddeford, Victor, Essex, North Fork Valley and Polson used surveys – either on-line or mailed – to prioritize and gauge the acceptability of the draft values. Biddeford, Damariscotta, Cortez and Gardiner held a series of meetings or focus groups to review the draft values. Larger community

meetings (i.e., “Summit,” “Base Camp”) were convened in Victor, Golden, and Cortez to select the values to be included in the final set. The Golden and Victor projects relied on keypad polling to choose among possible value statements. In Golden, participants at the Summit reviewed, consolidated and prioritized more than 2000 potential value statements, settling on 10 core values and 2 guiding principles. One reason that the distillation process was “closely held” in so many of the projects is that the task is technically complex and requires skills in qualitative analysis.

The nature of the values generated through H&S. The values generated by the nine projects varied tremendously in terms of the number and specificity of the statements included in the final product. These are included in Appendix 1. On the sparser end of the spectrum, Biddeford included five phrases (e.g., “Biddeford is good for families”), and Victor had five sets of bullet-point themes (e.g., “connected to nature”) and sub-themes (e.g., recreation, hunting, quiet places). Other projects had more detailed statements describing what was valued within each theme. Samples include:

- “We have a strong sense of community where people trust one another and feel safe” (Damariscotta);
- “Diversity: We value people as the heart of our community, appreciate and respect diversity, and practice inclusion” (Polson);
- “Strong Local Economy: We value a strong economy that welcomes businesses and entrepreneurs while maintaining the character of the community, including the historic downtown” (Gardiner).

The values were elaborated even more extensively in Golden, Cortez, North Fork Valley and Essex. In each of these cases, each theme had multiple value statements reflecting different aspects of the theme. In Golden, for example, the theme of “Accessible and Walkable” was described as follows:

- *We value being a community which is walkable, bikeable, and accessible to all.*
 1. We will provide safe, convenient and well maintained biking and walking opportunities appropriate for all ages and ability levels.
 2. We are committed to providing convenient and affordable public transportation and commuter options.
 3. We commit ourselves to fostering multi-modal opportunities (trails, paths, pedestrian bridges, roads) that enhance and maintain universal access, mobility and connectivity within and throughout the community.

Across the different projects, the value statements clustered into some predictable categories, especially nature or natural beauty (included by 8 of the 9 projects), sense of community or connectedness (n=8), strong or vibrant economy (n=7), family friendly (n=6), education (n=6), history and heritage (n=6), diversity (n=6), safety (n=6), small-town feel (n=5), sustaining local business (n=5), and active/healthy living (n=5).

According to the Field Guide, Heart & Soul value statements should be clear and specific enough to guide comprehensive plans, downtown master plans, strategic plans, budget allocation, land-use ordinances and other local policies. On the one hand, they should be able to serve as **filters** that can be applied to assess the merits or appropriateness of a proposal that comes up in front of the town council, zoning board or other elected body. On the other hand, the value statements should also be **aspirational** in the sense that residents, elected officials, business owners, developers and others will seek to embody the values when they put together their plans, proposals, enterprises and actions.

According to the Field Guide, Heart & Soul value statements should also be **distinctive**. These values “represent what is most important to residents and include those things that **distinguish a community** or

make it a good place to live” (p. 33). In other words, residents should see their own community reflected in the value statements.

Projects such as Golden, Cortez, Essex and North Fork Valley produced highly descriptive value statements, as well as multiple sub-statements that fleshed out the nuances of the overarching value. For example, the Cortez project described its values related to diversity with a summary statement (“We value the diversity of people, cultures and experiences in our community”) and a series of supporting statements that brought out the different forms of diversity existing within the community:

- *We value our rich historical heritage and respect the ancient cultures that inhabited our area before us, the many different cultures in our community now, and their rich cultural background.*
- *We value our resilience and our rugged “Western” spirit.*
- *We value the participation of all members of the community to share in our mutual heritage and want our city officials to be inclusive and transparent when making public decisions.*
- *We recognize that the inequalities that exist can be addressed through education, government and economic development.*

Likewise, Essex’s value statement around “thoughtful growth” included the following description:

We value wide-open spaces and tight-knit neighborhoods, rural roads and vibrant downtown streets. Essex is a place where we can enjoy a beautiful view, walk in the woods and go out to eat without ever leaving town. We support a diverse housing mix, opportunities for business development and a transportation system with a variety of options including a connected network of walking and biking routes.

In general, the Round 2 projects generated much more comprehensive and distinguishing value statements than did the Round 1 projects. Nearly all the Round 2 value statements described recognizable features of the community to be preserved and/or enhanced through planning, policy making, decision making, economic development and community development.

It is important to note that comprehensiveness has its downside. As more and more value statements and sub-statements are included, the overall set of statements may lose its clarity as a decision aid. More values means more opportunities for the values to be in conflict with one another. For example, in Essex’s statement about “thoughtful growth,” we can see the potential for “wide-open spaces” to run into conflict with “diverse housing mix” when it comes to a proposal for a cluster-home development.

We found potentially conflicting aspirations in many projects’ value statements, but especially within North Fork Valley’s values. Under “rural and natural environment,” the value statements point toward both preserving wilderness and resource extraction:

- *We value a rural lifestyle and the natural beauty in the North Fork Valley, which includes open space, vistas, dark night skies and a peaceful and relaxing environment.*
- *We value the wealth of resources in our environment that currently contribute to our primary economic sectors, such as coal mining, ranching, farming and value-added agricultural products.*

Including both statements has ambiguous implications when it comes to deciding on the appropriateness of development projects with at least moderate environmental impacts, including the idea of using fracking technology to recover oil and natural gas.

Likewise, some of North Fork Valley’s values statements focus on stewardship of the land and building community, while others are centered on freedom, independence and personal responsibility (“we

value the ‘freedom to be’ who we are and live our lives how we want to without undo authority telling us otherwise.”). Some segments of the local population felt strongly about shared responsibilities while other segments felt equally strongly about individual rights. For the sake of representing the entire community’s interests, there was merit in including both sets of values.

Reporting back to the community. Arguably the most crucial step in the entire Heart & Soul process is to ensure that all segments of the community are aware of the values and other key information that was collected during the various meetings, public events, story-sharing and review of documents. The nine projects have published a variety of reports, white papers and even glossy books. These products highlight the values, describe the process used to identify those values, present possible action steps, and more generally promote the principles of Community Heart & Soul. The books issued by Golden and North Fork Valley are particularly polished and professional.

The projects’ websites and Facebook pages serve as ongoing mechanisms for communicating the values and the various accomplishments of the Heart & Soul process. In addition, at least eight of the projects have produced videos containing selections from the storytelling process, interviews, celebrations, etc.

The Polson and North Fork Valley projects distributed surveys via U.S. Mail and as inserts in the local newspaper in order to elicit public feedback on the draft value statements. The response rate was much higher in North Fork Valley than in Polson. In both communities however interviewees regarded the survey as one of the most crucial means of informing the community about the project and its products. Participants in the Polson focus group were adamant that residents throughout the community had reviewed the draft values statements with interest when they received the postcard in the mail, even though the vast majority failed to actually return the card with their votes.

Translating Values into Projects, Policy and Land-Use Plans. By design, the selection of Heart & Soul values is not the end of the process, but the launching-off point for actions that preserve “what matters most” and improve local quality of life. The translation of values into action has occurred to varying degrees in virtually all the demonstration communities.

In a number of communities the planning process explicitly generated concrete action projects. These included: re-opening of Pierre’s Playhouse and the construction of a dirt-bike track in Victor, creation of a pocket park in Hotchkiss, renovation of the Paradise Theatre in Paonia, design of new gateway entrance signs in Polson, and a little free library in Essex. A number of projects (e.g., North Fork Valley, Golden, Biddeford, Gardiner) used mini-grants or challenge grants to fund creative ideas generated by local residents or non-profits.

A subset of the demonstration communities went into the project with the intent of translating their Heart & Soul values into a more responsive and community-oriented comprehensive plan, downtown revitalization plan or zoning policy. This generally did occur, although not always as fully or immediately as the project team had imagined.

- In both Golden and Gardiner, the planning departments did in fact revise their comprehensive plans in ways that aligned with the Heart & Soul values.
- The City of Golden also incorporated its Heart & Soul values into neighborhood plans, a new zoning district category, and review criteria for new development proposals.

- In Cortez, the Heart & Soul process led to the creation of a Downtown Beautification Plan. In addition, the City Planning Department intends to directly incorporate the values into its next rewrite of the Comprehensive Plan, and is also analyzing the City's land-use code to determine which provisions are consistent with the values and which might need revising.
- Biddeford revised its master plan for downtown in accord with the Heart & Soul values.
- Using CommunityViz, the Victor project engaged residents in an interactive, participatory approach to Main Street planning. The results of this process directly informed the City's Capital Improvement Plan. In addition, town officials in Victor are planning to incorporate the values into their next rewrite of their Comprehensive Plan.
- In Damariscotta, the project sponsored a multi-day "design charrette" to craft a vision for how the town should develop over the coming decades. The charrette engaged approximately 250 people (not all of whom were residents of the town) in focus groups, small-group sessions and large meetings, and employed innovative planning techniques such as CommunityViz. A comprehensive summary report was widely distributed throughout the community, in part to build public support for "Form Based Code" that would advance the Heart & Soul values. This policy idea was defeated in a local referendum, but the summary report has been influential in guiding how public officials and others think about land-use and development options. The Heart & Soul values were considered when the Town next revised its Comprehensive Plan. A number of points that arose during the charrette are being incorporated into current efforts to develop the waterfront with a boardwalk and more recognition of local history.

In other communities, especially those where municipal government is a "secondary" project partner, there has been a less direct translation of values into land-use policy and plans. The North Fork Valley and Essex projects, in particular, have yet to create the necessary inroads to influence planning and zoning policy within their respective towns and villages (although the Town of Paonia did use the values as part of the interview process for a new town manager). In Polson, the mayor and elected officials have expressed a willingness to apply the Heart & Soul values to policy making and planning.

Collateral benefit to other efforts. It is important to recognize that the Heart & Soul process invariably plays out in a larger community context. In most of the demonstration communities, other planning efforts, conversations, debates, collaborative work and project-development efforts were running concurrently with Heart & Soul, sometimes in competition but more often in synergistic alignment.

In some instances, the Heart & Soul process created a forum for community-wide discussion on specific high-profile issues or opportunities. For example, in Cortez the Heart & Soul process occurred at the same time that the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) was considering options for repaving the state highways that intersect in downtown Cortez. The City Planning Department sponsored a series of open forums under the auspices of Heart & Soul to gain public input on the various alternatives. As a result of these forums (which were much more inclusive and participatory than what typically occurs in highway planning), the City proposed and CDOT approved a beautification project that included the planting of native plants and trees in the medians. The City and CDOT also agreed to install new "gateway signs" at the four primary entrances to the city. The City contracted with a design firm and the Heart & Soul project convened a number of meetings to provide input, leading to designs that are much more in keeping with local values and sensibilities. In addition, officials from the Ute Mountain Ute tribe

were brought into the process to guide the design of the sign that greets visitors to Cortez when they arrive from the south (where the Ute Mountain reservation is located).

Another collateral benefit of Heart & Soul in Cortez was to apply an inclusive, participatory public process to a particular development project that came before the Zoning Board. The developer in this case was proposing to build a Maverick gas station/convenience mart at the eastern edge of town, adjacent to an alternative school. In addition to holding formal hearings on the proposed design, the developer agreed to engage with local residents, school officials and students to come up with a design for the property that would promote safety and allow adequate space for customers to park and to sit outside. The process left all parties believing that the Maverick station was well-designed and a good neighbor.

Beyond Cortez, the Heart & Soul process played an important role in the formation of the Creative Coalition in the North Fork Valley. This group applied for and was awarded an official “Creative District” designation from the State of Colorado. The CAT for Heart & Soul had many overlapping members of the Coalition, and the Heart & Soul process highlighted the artistic and cultural amenities of the North Fork Valley. In this way, both groups benefited from the partnership.

Another win-win partnership was in Biddeford where the Heart of Biddeford not only was the organizer of the local Heart & Soul project but also served as one of the major forces in stimulating downtown development (in keeping with its mission as a Main Street Organization). In addition to developing values and a vision for downtown Biddeford, the Heart & Soul process allowed the Heart of Biddeford to create a robust strategy to guide the organization’s own efforts over subsequent years. The Heart of Biddeford has been remarkably successful in delivering on this strategy, which has paid off in tangible ways for the development of downtown Biddeford. One of the major projects where the Heart of Biddeford has played a major role (along with the City Council and the City’s Economic Development Department) is the Riverwalk development, which will build a walkway and pedestrian bridges to link parks, commercial businesses, condos, artist studios and renovated industrial buildings along the Saco River.

Broader and Longer Term Outcomes

The experience in Biddeford directly illustrates two distinct ways in which Heart & Soul can pay off long-term for the participating communities. First, the process led to the creation of Master Plan for the downtown area, which has served as a touchstone for imagining and launching a variety of ambitious development projects in line with the community’s values. Second, a key anchor organization in town – Heart of Biddeford – significantly increased its capacity and credibility, which has itself produced widespread benefit.

One or both of these outcomes also occurred in many of the other the demonstration projects. For example, all four of the Round 1 communities can point to evidence that **elected officials, municipal staff and community leaders are being guided by the values, priorities, plans and designs that emerged from the Heart & Soul process**. This is particularly true with regard to planning and decision making regarding new development projects. Because the Round 2 sites have only recently completed the planning phase of Heart & Soul, there has been less time for the values, vision and priorities to take root. However, government officials in both Cortez and Polson are already incorporating Heart & Soul output into their thinking and decision making.

The second outcome cited in Biddeford – **increased capacity and credibility among the lead organization** – has also occurred in multiple sites. For example, the Greater Polson Community Foundation has emerged from Heart & Soul as a more visible leader in the community, attracting more members and more interest in setting up donor-advised funds. Valley Advocates for Responsible Development (VARD) also became more widely known and respected through the Heart & Soul project in Victor. Information and perspectives collected through the process allowed VARD to be more strategic in its work.

Increased capacity and credibility also occurred when town government managed the Heart & Soul process. Especially in Golden and Cortez, the planning departments became much more skilled at community outreach and engaging a broad mix of residents in planning and decision making. In both cases, the planning staff who were directly involved in Heart & Soul have become more visible and more widely recognized for their skills and vision, not just within city government but also among residents. This appears to be enhancing **the public's trust in municipal government** more generally. Residents have come to view town officials as more open and responsive to their concerns. Golden in particular can point to a number of low-income neighborhoods where residents were historically suspicious and even hostile in their views toward the City, but built more trusting relationships with the Planning Department during neighborhood meetings convened through Heart & Soul.

Even when local governments were not actually running the Heart & Soul project, they were able to learn from the experience and to adopt **new forms of community engagement and decision making** that better incorporate residents' interests and values. Golden has continued to offer funding to neighborhood groups to convene block parties and neighborhood gatherings. The City of Cortez is establishing a new citizen's advisory committee that will bring input on matters before the City Council and various boards. In Damariscotta the keypad polling was introduced at meetings of the Planning Board, and the Town Planner instituted informal gatherings over coffee. Meetings of the Town Council or Select Board are now televised in Damariscotta and Gardiner. The Essex project gained approval from the Town of Essex's Select Board to experiment with a deliberative process for establishing the Town's budget – in place of a ballot initiative that others in the community had proposed.

The other major community-level outcome that we feel confident ascribing to Heart & Soul is **increased skills and leadership among project leaders**. The Heart & Soul model required the CAT and especially the coordinator to step boldly into a high-stakes, high-profile experience. As the process played out, these actors found themselves facing a multitude of operational challenges, highly charged opinions, strange politics, and often intense inter-personal and inter-organizational dynamics. Through a combination of perseverance, reflective practice, networking with other communities and coaching and training from the Foundation, many of the project leaders significantly increased their planning-related knowledge and skills. We can easily identify at least two players in each community who established themselves as more capable, competent and visible leaders. A smaller but still significant number had life-changing transformations as a result of their experience. At least one coordinator and two CAT members decided to run for public office.

One of the more interesting side benefits of Heart & Soul is the **emergence of new leaders**. Most of the projects involved a significant number of residents who were new to the community (some having moved within the past year). For many of them, the Heart & Soul project provided a means of getting involved in the community, networking and demonstrating what they could offer. A number of these newcomers (both coordinators and CAT members) have established themselves as leaders and change agents. This is particularly true in Cortez and North Fork Valley.

It appears to us that the skill-building, leadership-development and personal transformation that occurred as a result of Heart & Soul was limited to the inner circle of actors who were directly involved in carrying out the work. Participants in the story-sharing events and community meetings typically had a rewarding experience but not one that was so powerful as to catalyze new skills or leadership.

One longer-term outcome that we do think is beginning to emerge from the community events is **new and stronger relationships among residents**. Participants regularly were placed into settings where they were introduced to people they did not know. The experiences were dynamic enough to cause participants to learn about one another's personal history, values and point of view. This allowed new relationships to form, some of which have persisted following Heart & Soul. While some of the community meetings and events attracted participants from the same neighborhood or the same social circle, others drew more broadly from the community. We heard anecdotally about the formation or strengthening of relationships that bridged across neighborhoods, generations, social standing, political ideology and (to a lesser extent) race and ethnicity.

The Foundation expressed an interest in bringing residents together not only in new relationships, but also toward a **shared understanding of their community**, including its history, the assets that matter most, what needs to be preserved, and how to improve conditions moving forward. We saw evidence of this sort of convergence in many of the demonstration communities, although only a subset of residents had been engaged enough with Heart & Soul to re-orient their perspective in ways that would bring alignment in understanding and values. Moreover, some communities (e.g., North Fork Valley, Essex) appeared to us to remain as divided after the process as they were before Heart & Soul.

Another outcome that the Foundation is interested in achieving through Heart & Soul is **increased civic engagement**. Obviously the Heart & Soul process in itself encourages residents to turn out for community meetings, celebrations and other public events. The real question is whether this increased participation persists once this phase of the process has been completed. In other words, did the process lead residents to become more civically minded and engage more generally in community decision making, volunteer work and actions that improve quality of life. This question requires more detailed and extensive data that we were able to collect in this evaluation, but we offer the following observations:

1. As noted above, the individuals who were directly involved in designing and managing the local Heart & Soul effort often became more active in the community as a result of their experience. This was particularly true of newcomers.
2. At least some of the participants in the community meetings and events appear to have become more active in nonprofit organizations, arts-related programming, downtown development and other community-building efforts.
3. A smaller number of participants have increased their engagement in local government affairs, but we heard little evidence in most communities that residents were participating at higher rates in meetings of town councils, planning boards, etc.

Combining points 2 and 3, one might conclude that the Heart & Soul process primed local residents for engagement in active, creative and participatory forums for community-building, but this increased propensity for civic engagement has not translated into participating in standard government meetings.

Implementation Challenges

While the Heart & Soul process generated clear and meaningful benefits in virtually all of the Round 1 and 2 communities, it is important to temper this assessment with a recognition of the costs involved in carrying out the model. One of the most consistent themes we heard during the interviews and focus groups was the extreme commitment of time and effort that the model requires, certainly on the part of the coordinator but also members of the CAT. It was clear to the Evaluation Team that all of the local project teams poured their heart and soul into carrying the model.

The requirements associated with Heart & Soul were much greater than any of the key participants anticipated when they applied for the Heart & Soul grant. This was in large part due to their lack of experience with in-depth community planning efforts, especially one that called for broad and diverse community engagement, the collection and analysis of stories, and the generation of values through a participatory process.

The high expectations and time requirements associated with the Heart & Soul model sometimes led to frustration, burn-out and resentment among many of the project leaders and CAT members. But the vast majority of the CAT members maintained their commitment to the process and did what was required to complete the required steps. On the other hand, there was notable attrition among CAT members and a moderate level of turnover among coordinators – sometimes because of a mismatch with the position, sometimes because of a move or change in personal circumstances, and sometimes because the coordinator was overwhelmed with the process. Especially in projects where the process was vigorously opposed by a segment of the community, the coordinators and other leaders were sometimes attacked personally in public forums, letters to the editor, social media and other means, which led to additional stress and anxiety.

Regardless of the reason behind their leaving, turnover in coordinators generally led to a loss of momentum and typically set the process back by approximately 2 months.

Factors Contributing to Successful Implementation

In this section we highlight a few of the factors that we identified as being critical in implementing the Heart & Soul model effectively and in generating meaningful outcomes. A more systematic analysis of readiness conditions is presented in the final chapter of the report.

1. Successful implementation required a highly skilled coordinator able to provide strong leadership and to ensure that the many steps were completed in a timely and thorough manner. Communities varied in their degree to which they were able to hire such a person. In Biddeford and Gardiner, the original coordinators were replaced because they did not have the required skill set.
2. The process was even more complex, time-consuming and frustrating in communities where segments of the population were suspicious of the process, and even more disrupted in communities where there was outright opposition to the process.
3. The process also bogged down when the CAT and/or the coordinator lacked a clear sense of the overarching purpose for doing Heart & Soul.

4. The impact on long-term planning, policy making and decision making was greater in those communities where local government was explicitly and directly involved in carrying out the process.

Role of the Foundation

So far we have emphasized the contributions of local actors in carrying the Heart & Soul process and in applying the values and other products into plans, projects, increased capacity, community building and other outcomes. It is important to also highlight the role of the Orton Family Foundation in supporting each of the nine projects with financial, technical and inter-personal supports that proved essential to carrying out the required steps and generating meaningful products and outcomes.

Though all project sites contributed matching financial resources, funding from the Foundation was viewed as essential by interviewees, particularly for projects that were staffed by a nonprofit organization or independent consultant. It is less clear whether Golden and Cortez might have been able to carry out the process without Foundation funding. In both cases, the city planning departments supplemented the grant funding with direct staffing support from high-level professionals, and might have been able to sponsor the project outright if outside grant funding had not been available.

Interviewees and focus group participants in all nine funded communities were clear that they could not have carried out the Heart & Soul process without the consulting, training and materials supplied by the Foundation. The Heart & Soul approach to planning was new to these communities and required tools and techniques that were unfamiliar to local residents. Participants relied heavily on the individual coaching and advising that Foundation staff provided to their respective project teams, the various resource materials that spelled out how to do the various steps in the model, and the cross-site training where representatives from each project could steep themselves in work and compare their experiences with one another. The Round 2 sites were particularly appreciative of these national trainings, while the Round 1 sites indicated that they would have liked more of this sort of structured guidance and networking.

While the projects benefited from having individualized attention from the Foundation's skilled and knowledgeable professionals, there was some tension around the mixed purposes that Foundation staff brought to their interactions. On the one hand, they were advisors and trainers aiming to support the projects in achieving their goals. On the other hand, Foundation staff were also acting as more typical program officers focused on financial and programmatic accountability. In this guise, the staff members ensured that the projects carried out the steps specified in the Heart & Soul model and spent their grant dollars in line with the Foundation's expectations. These two roles sometimes clashed, leaving the project teams unclear whether they should truly open up and reveal their concerns and confusion to the Foundation. This tension was heightened to a greater degree in cases where Foundation staff appeared to hold back offering advice and direction to the community on the grounds that they did not want to unduly influence what the projects decided to do during the test phase of Heart & Soul.

4. Summary and Recommendations

Our findings demonstrate that the Community Heart & Soul program can serve as a powerful catalyst to improving community decision making (especially with regard to development and land use) and can also promote leadership development, capacity building, social capital and civic engagement (certainly among those leading the project and, to a lesser extent within the community more broadly). At the same time, the Heart & Soul model is inherently labor-intensive and requires a host of skills in planning, analysis, communications and strategy development. Many of the towns and small cities that can potentially benefit from Heart & Soul may not have residents who bring the requisite skill set to serve on the CAT and (more especially) to lead the project as coordinator. Even towns that do have the capacity to carry out Heart & Soul according to design can expect to experience challenges and conflict. In the end, we believe that the Heart & Soul process is a **positive disruptive force** in most of the communities that faithfully pursue the model. It causes residents to turn out for meetings and conversations (both small-group and large-group) in ways that are outside traditional norms. It also leads to intentional reflection by community members on the community's character and critical features.

Summary Analysis of Heart & Soul Model

The previous chapter described what occurred when the nine Round 1 and Round 2 communities implemented the Heart & Soul model with grant support and technical assistance from the Foundation. Here we extend that analysis with a set of assessments regarding the model itself, taking into account that the current version of the model (as described in the Field Guide) is somewhat different than the version that we evaluated.

1. Resources and Capacity required to carry out the model

- a)** To be done well, the Heart & Soul process **requires a full-time coordinator and a large supporting cast**. Volunteers can play valuable roles, but paid staff are essential. When volunteers are engaged, they should not be expected to contribute at levels appropriate for paid staff.
- b)** The Heart & Soul model had especially rigorous requirements for engaging the community and for collecting and analyzing qualitative data. This was something that the CAT and coordinator only came to appreciate once they were into the process.
- c)** The Heart & Soul process **requires a set of technical skills and complex expertise** (e.g., strategic communications, qualitative data analysis, complex project management) that are difficult to recruit in many communities, especially smaller communities.

2. Flexibility and Ambiguity in Purpose

- a)** The H&S model has benefits for different communities who come with different needs – creating or revising a Comprehensive Plan or Downtown Master Plan, identifying high-leverage projects that will improve the community's economy or quality of life, establishing priorities for budgeting or funding, increasing civic engagement, etc. The flexibility of the model – combined with its complexity – makes it challenging to gain a clear and unified understanding of purpose.
- b)** Because of its complexity and ability to serve multiple purposes, **the Heart & Soul model invites a certain level of confusion**. Without clear messaging on overarching purpose, local residents often view the Heart & Soul as simply an exercise in storytelling or community discourse. But clear messaging requires clarity of purpose and consensus among the project's organizers – which didn't occur in at least some of the demonstration projects.

3. *Story sharing as a means of identifying what matters most*

- a) The stories that residents share through the H&S process point to both the positive attributes of the community and the challenges that at least some residents face.
- b) To gain a valid view of what matters most to the entire community, the process needs to include participants who represent all segments of the community. However, the H&S process doesn't appeal to everyone, especially to those with pressing demands in their personal life. Concerted and sensitive outreach is required to engage young people, parents of young children and resident with limited financial means.
- c) In order for people to want to tell their story, they need to understand and appreciate the value of the H&S process, and trust the people who are running it.
 - i. Residents will be reluctant to participate if who feel that they have historically been excluded from the life of the community or disrespected by those with power.
 - ii. Hispanic residents have a special concern about participating in public processes.
 - iii. Native Americans have their own traditions around storytelling, as well as distinct norms and protocols that govern the sharing of stories outside the Tribe.
- d) For a H&S project to succeed at engaging all groups in the story-sharing process, the CAT needs to include members of each group and these members need to have the chance to determine the design and conduct of the H&S process.

4. *Value Statements and other products emerging from H&S process*

- a) While the stories that are shared during the Heart & Soul process are particular to each community, the values that the coordinator and/or CAT members derive from those stories tend to fall into predictable categories (e.g., small-town feel; family friendly; safe and strong neighborhoods; sustainable local economy; appreciation of history, culture and natural environment). Without careful guidance, projects are likely to create fairly generic statements of "what matters most" that are applicable to most towns or small cities.
- b) In communities with strong cultural, ethnic, ideological or political divisions, striving for "shared values" is extremely challenging and unlikely to be productive. Consensus can only be achieved on generic values. Moreover, if the group leading Heart & Soul is viewed as partisan or aligned, the resulting values won't be viewed as representing the entire community.
- c) Even when the value statements fail to distinguish one town from another, the other products emerging from the Heart & Soul process (e.g., reports, books, videos) often do capture the essence of the community. As such, they can serve as useful points of departure for future planning, problem-solving and consensus-building efforts.
- d) The Heart & Soul experience and the products generated by the process have a fairly long shelf life. Indeed, communities may revisit and benefit from their H&S experience and products years later. But this possibility should not be viewed as a substitute for ensuring that communities get to action while the process is still fresh.

5. *Role of local government*

- a) Active engagement and commitment from local government is arguably the most crucial factor in determining the success of a Heart & Soul project.
- b) In many respects it is ideal for the local planning department to lead the process. Government-run projects have a direct pathway for translating the Heart & Soul values into land-use plans, ordinances, project designs and budget priorities.
- c) In some, but not all communities, local government broader credibility in leading the process than does any other candidate organization.

- d) There are a number of important potential downsides to having local government play the lead role in a Heart & Soul process.
 - i. Government officials are understandably cautious about staking out clear positions on controversial issues. Although the Heart & Soul process is intended to be neutral with regard to the specific value statements that emerge for a community, we observed instances in which Heart & Soul elicited political opposition from some segments of the community (e.g., because of the model's emphasis on community building and planning, as well as the implicit endorsement of sustainable development). If controversy arises, elected officials or planning staff may retreat from their commitment to the model, which can defuse momentum and stall out the process.
 - ii. Elected officials turn over on a regular basis, which can lead to swings in the town's level of commitment.
 - iii. Even if elected officials maintain a strong personal commitment, this enthusiasm may not extend to the staff who are tasked with carrying out the day-to-day work that the Heart & Soul model demands.

Recommendations

Given this analysis of the strengths, limitations, qualifications and complications surrounding the Heart & Soul model, we offer up the following recommendations as food for thought as the Foundation considers their options for further replication and dissemination of the model.

1. Because the Heart & Soul process can serve so many distinct purposes, it is crucial for project teams to clarify their overarching goals on the front end of the process. Once this purpose is defined, it should be communicated repeatedly among the project team and throughout the community. In addition, clarifying the purpose will allow the project team to select the Heart & Soul tools and methods that are most relevant and powerful for their own community.
2. Ensure that the project has sufficient resources, especially staff effort, before commencing.
3. Think strategically about how much story-sharing and how many community meetings are actually needed to derive representative values. Some aspects of community engagement might be better conducted after the values have been developed.
4. Anticipate that there will be burn-out among the CAT, especially among the more action-oriented members. Engage members selectively at different points along the process, taking into account each member's interests, skills and personality (e.g., process vs. action orientation).
5. Establish milestones so that all members of the project team have a clear sense of how far they have come and what steps are left to complete.
6. Do more to promote diversity among the CAT and to ensure their cultural competency when meeting with residents who have different cultural, ethnic, racial or economic backgrounds.
7. Recognize the limitations of values statements as guides to decision making. Especially in divided communities, the values that emerge from a consensus process may be too generic to offer clear direction on which actions, policies and projects should be pursued, and which should not.

8. Recognize that Heart & Soul is inherently a “progressive” project in that it promotes smart planning, civic engagement and community-building. This may spur substantial criticism and even opposition in communities with sizeable numbers of conservative residents. On the other hand, this is not a reason to avoid doing Heart & Soul, and indeed the project is inherently all about change.

Facilitators and Inhibitors of Success

To aid the Foundation in selecting communities that are ready and suitable for Heart & Soul, we have identified a set of contextual factors that we believe, based on what we learned through the evaluation, either facilitate or inhibit success in a given town or city. These “moderating” factors pertain both to characteristics of the community and characteristics of the organization(s) and people who are managing the project.

Community context. We identified six aspects of the community context that we believe are predictive of how smooth or challenging it will be for a project team to carry out the required steps of the Heart & Soul model. These include:

1. the complexity of the jurisdictional boundaries bordering and crossing the target community;
2. the level of individual and organizational capacity that exists in the community, defined in terms of the specific knowledge and skills required by Heart & Soul;
3. the level of enthusiasm and agency (i.e., willingness to act) that residents demonstrate toward improving their community;
4. the community’s level of prior experience with community planning efforts;
5. the attitudes of local residents toward zoning and other forms of land-use planning and decision making; and
6. the degree to which there are tensions or conflicts between different segments of the community.

We assume the Heart & Soul model will be easier to carry out in communities that have: 1) simpler boundaries (e.g., focused on one particular town), 2) higher pre-existing capacity, 3) enthusiasm and a “can-do” attitude regarding improving the community, 4) a history of positive experiences with community planning, 5) acceptance among the general public that land-use planning and zoning is important for advancing the community’s overall interests, and 6) positive relationships and trust among different segments of the community. We are under no illusions that any community will satisfy all these conditions, but some communities come closer to the ideal than others.

Organizational context. Projects also struggled or progressed as a function of the organizational infrastructure that managed the process. We identified four of these organizational factors that appeared to us to predict how effectively and smoothly the process would be carried out. These include:

1. the credibility and neutrality of the lead agency, which we presume is crucial for recruiting a representative cross-section of the community and ensuring that the process is widely regarded as “fair” and the values statements are regarded as “valid;”
2. buy-in from elected officials and staff from the relevant local governments;
3. the skill set of the coordinator (as specified in the Foundation’s “Selecting a Heart & Soul Coordinator” guide); and

4. capacity and commitment within the Community Advisory Team (with special attention to ensuring that at least a couple CAT members are skilled and experienced in each of the model's required tasks).

Concluding Thoughts

In evaluating the process and outcomes associated with the Community Heart & Soul program, we found that it is not possible to tell a single, unified story. The nine demonstration sites did not implement Heart & Soul in the same manner (and certainly not in strict accordance with the new *Field Guide*). Instead, they carried out community outreach, story-sharing and values-derivation in their own distinct manner, according to their project's overriding purpose. These purposes varied considerably from community to community, even though ultimately they all were looking to preserve what mattered most to residents and to improve quality of life throughout the community.

Because of the between-site variability in purpose, it is more appropriate to think of the Heart & Soul model not so much as a specific community planning procedure (defined by a prescribed set of steps), but rather as a principles-based approach defined by an overarching philosophy, key tasks to be accomplished and a list of possible approaches for carrying those tasks. "Doing Heart & Soul" involves an active interaction between the program model and the local context. While it is certainly possible to **disseminate** the Heart & Soul model, it is neither possible nor desirable to seek the sort of **standardized replication** that is the goal for many evidence-based programs. Instead the Foundation should support thoughtful and strategic application of the model to suit the distinct needs and interests of each community.

Appendix 1:
Heart & Soul Value Statements from Round 1 and Round 2 Communities

Round 1 Communities

Biddeford

1. Biddeford is good for families,
2. History is important,
3. Diversity is a plus,
4. Biddeford is making a comeback,
5. Great small town feel.

Victor

1. Connected to nature (Recreation/hunting, Livestock/Agriculture, Quiet places and times);
2. Culturally historic (Historic stories and traditions, Historic buildings);
3. Family friendly (Family housing, Diverse generations, Schools, Walkable and bikeable streets);
4. Small town feel (Small town scale and pace), Sense of community, Gathering places and community events, Attractive Main Street);
5. Sustainability (Self-sustaining, Cost of living, Economic diversity)

Damariscotta

1. We can live locally, meeting our daily needs by supporting our helpful merchants.
2. We can work locally and can grow locally owned businesses.
3. We have a strong sense of community where people trust one another and feel safe.
4. We are an involved community that participates in schools, organizations, churches and community events and festivals.
5. We appreciate the close proximity of culture and nature. Right out our back doors we might see a seal or a moose, but we also have fine restaurants, art galleries, theater, bookstores and library, all within walking distance.
6. We have easy access to goods and services, to local government and to information.

Golden

Theme A – ACCESSIBLE AND WALKABLE

We value being a community which is walkable, bikeable, and accessible to all.

4. We will provide safe, convenient and well maintained biking and walking opportunities appropriate for all ages and ability levels.
5. We are committed to providing convenient and affordable public transportation and commuter options.
6. We commit ourselves to fostering multi-modal opportunities (trails, paths, pedestrian bridges, roads) that enhance and maintain universal access, mobility and connectivity within and throughout the community.

Theme B – ACTIVE OUTDOORS/ ENVIRONMENT

We value being an active, healthy community that appreciates the outdoors and our connection to the natural environment.

1. We value the natural beauty of Golden, located in a valley bounded by the foothills and two scenic mesas.
2. We value proximity to open space and natural beauty and we will preserve access to experience these.
3. We value the health and well-being of our community and will provide indoor and outdoor facilities, organized activities and programs to support active living for all ages.
4. We value Clear Creek as a heart & soul element of Golden and will actively preserve and enhance its character for future generations.
5. We value self-directed recreation and will preserve and maintain trails for biking, hiking, climbing and other outdoor pursuits.
6. We value the natural beauty of unique geologic features, extended stretches of the foothills, and unbroken stretches of natural environments that define Golden as a place.

Theme C – SAFE, CLEAN, QUIET NEIGHBORHOODS

We value safe, quiet, clean, well-maintained neighborhoods.

1. We will be a place where we can go anywhere at any time and feel safe.
2. Our city will have clean, well-maintained neighborhoods and streets.

Theme D – LOCAL BUSINESSES AND DOWNTOWN

We value supporting our local businesses/and keeping a vibrant downtown for future generations.

1. We believe that it is important to maintain an environment which encourages a variety of quality and locally owned businesses and restaurants so that residents of Golden can purchase locally while continuing to encourage visitors to visit Golden and support our local businesses.
2. We will encourage/promote downtown events and activities that enhance life and connect people.
3. We value the character of downtown (its size and varied architecture). Therefore, it is important to preserve, enhance and complement the historic buildings downtown with both public and private investments. The streetscape, walkability and accessibility are critical in this effort.
4. We value joint efforts by business people, volunteers and city government as important drivers to promote business success and preserve the historic look and feel of Golden.

Theme E – CONVENIENCE/ AMENITIES

We value retaining convenience to services and amenities/and our proximity to Denver and mountains.

1. We value the proximity to Denver and the mountains, while maintaining our geographic separateness.
2. We value the convenience of services and amenities within Golden (including schools, work, shopping, medical, cultural and recreational opportunities).
3. We value access to public and private transportation options within and beyond the community.

Theme F – HISTORY/EDUCATION

We value our appreciation of history and the arts/support for quality education.

1. We value our diverse and multigenerational continuity, excellence at all educational levels with connections to the community.
2. We value an excellence in quality and pride of the preservation and promotion of the arts and their place in providing and supporting community connections and values.
3. We value community organizations/collaboration between public and private groups to allow for preservation of our historical and cultural assets, while providing continuity with the future.
4. We support lifelong learning via our public library, museums, educational institutions and cultural facilities.

Theme G – FAMILY AND KID FRIENDLY

We value being a family /kid-friendly/kid-supportive community.

1. We will foster a sense of family in our community that is safe for our children.
2. We value a kid friendly environment, with family activities and event both indoors and outdoors.
3. We will develop opportunities to foster stability and maintain excellent schools as is important to the positive development of our children.

Theme H – FRIENDLINESS / NEIGHBORS

We value maintaining friendliness and connections with neighbors and other residents.

1. We value having friendly and welcoming neighbors that create helpful, caring and respectful neighborhoods.
2. We value being a connected Golden community through events, parks, local merchants, organizations, schools, government, trails and Clear Creek.

Round 2 Communities

Polson

1. GOVERNANCE: We value an ethical, transparent and accountable local government that encourages respectful, civil dialogue, so together we can build a strong community.
2. EDUCATION: We value life-long learning that prepares us for work and life, and results in citizens' contributions and community vibrancy through collaborative planning and systemic support by educators, parents, students and community members.
3. NATURAL BEAUTY AND ACTIVE LIFESTYLE: We treasure the exceptional beauty and stewardship of our natural environment and its premier features – Flathead Lake and the surrounding mountains – which provide us healthy recreational, spiritual and economic benefits.
4. TRADITIONAL / HERITAGE: We value all the traditions, heritages and family ties which together unify us as a neighborly community that provides a sense of safety, belonging and feeling cared for in our daily lives.
5. YOUTH: We value our youth, empowering them to serve and grow through engaging activities and leadership opportunities to positively impact their future while building confidence and self-worth.
6. VIBRANT DOWNTOWN: We value a thriving, diverse, inviting downtown that enhances our sense of community and is safe, fun and walkable.
7. VIBRANT LOCAL ECONOMY: We value a strong local economy that provides opportunities for all residents to live, work and thrive here.
8. DIVERSITY: We value people as the heart of our community, appreciate and respect diversity, and practice inclusion.

Gardiner

1. FAMILY FRIENDLINESS: We value spaces and organizations that are available to residents of all ages and income levels.
2. EDUCATION: We value an education system that prepares students for a global environment.
3. CONNECTION TO NATURE: We value outdoor recreation opportunities and the preservation of open space.
4. HISTORY, ARTS & CULTURE: We value history while continuing to develop diverse cultural activities for residents of all ages.
5. STRONG LOCAL ECONOMY: We value a strong economy that welcomes businesses and entrepreneurs while maintaining the character of the community, including the historic downtown.
6. SENSE OF COMMUNITY / SENSE OF BELONGING: We value a community where residents are helpful, caring and show respect for each other.
7. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND VOLUNTEERISM: We place high value on volunteering and civic involvement.
8. LIVABILITY: We value preserving the character of the city while ensuring that residents of all ages and incomes have access to family support systems, transportation, and arts and culture opportunities.
9. INFRASTRUCTURE/CITY SERVICES: We value safe, well-maintained roads, sidewalks, schools and public spaces that are accessible and clean in all seasons.
10. UNIQUE PHYSICAL ASSETS: We value the city's unique natural and built assets that are at the heart of the community's identity, and believe that they should be available to all residents.
11. INCLUSIVE, RESPONSIVE GOVERNMENT: We value open, two-way communication between residents and community decision makers.

Essex

LOCAL ECONOMY

- Our residents contribute to a vibrant economy by working for and patronizing a diverse mix of businesses, from small, locally-owned enterprises to international corporations. We are committed to fostering an environment that produces a world class workforce and a strong economy for years to come.

HEALTH & RECREATION

- We value public places for outdoor and indoor recreation for all ages and abilities. We treasure
- Indian Brook reservoir, neighborhood parks and the chance to connect by bicycle or on foot.
- Community institutions provide education and programs to support healthy lifestyles.

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

- Our deep connections with each other make Essex special. Neighbors help each other during good times and bad.
- We value diversity and welcome everyone. We build our sense of community at local events such as the Memorial Day Parade, Five Corners Farmers Market, and Winter Carnival. Our local newspapers and online forums give us plenty of ways to stay in touch. Residents participate in local government and volunteer.

EDUCATION

- Essex invests time, energy, and resources to ensure that our highly respected schools meet the needs of everyone in the community. We are proud to support learning that extends beyond the traditional classroom and includes the arts, athletics, and vocational instruction.
- Community programs, and libraries offer diverse and affordable opportunities that prepare residents of all ages for lifelong learning and for work in an evolving economy.

THOUGHTFUL GROWTH

- We value wide-open spaces and tight-knit neighborhoods, rural roads and vibrant downtown streets. Essex is a place where we can enjoy a beautiful view, walk in the woods and go out to eat without ever leaving town. We support a diverse housing mix, opportunities for business development and a transportation system with a variety of options including a connected network of walking and biking routes.

SAFETY

- Essex is a safe place where neighbors watch out for one another. We value an active, visible police force and strong fire and rescue services. Upgrades to our physical infrastructure will allow us to move about our community with comfort and security.

Cortez

1. FRIENDLY PEOPLE; ACCEPTING, SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITY

We recognize that people are our most important resource, and that Cortez is a friendly community.

- We strive to respect and care for each other as individuals.
- We strive to create a network that fosters acceptance.
- We want public officials to offer opportunities for community conversations that will foster positive change and help us move our community forward.

2. IMPORTANCE OF PLACE

We value the natural beauty and geographic diversity of our area.

- We live in a prime location, close to mountains and desert.
- We value the variety of outdoor activities available in our community.
- We value the open agricultural landscapes that interface with Montezuma County and provide open space around our town.
- We value protecting our natural resources, including water, scenic vistas, air quality, and agricultural lands for future generations.
- We expect our city officials to consider quality of life issues because they help drive the economy and community development.

3. SMALL TOWN FEEL / HOME FAMILY AND CHURCH FAMILY

Cortez is "a place where you can build a life . . . regardless of where you are starting from." We value our identity as a small town, both its physical size and sense of peace and security.

- We value the safe feeling we have in Cortez which makes it a great place to live and to raise children.
- We value the connections that a small town fosters and the way that we demonstrate our care and concern for one another.
- We value the slower pace and relaxed lifestyle that comes from living in a small town, as well as the lack of traffic congestion and long lines.
- We value the easy access to the services that our small town affords.
- We value our church family and friends and the diversity of congregations in our community.
- We recognize that Cortez is a good place to "grow your faith."
- We want planning decisions to reflect the importance of a relaxed lifestyle and slower pace.

4. LIBRARY, PARKS AND RECREATION CENTER, AND COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

We value the facilities, community activities and services that support an excellent quality of life and bind our community together. The parks and recreation program is a centerpiece of our community and highly valued by residents.

- The library, recreation center, parks, and open space enrich the quality of our lives while community-wide activities help bind us together as a community.
- Community services provided by numerous non-profit organizations are concrete demonstrations of how we care for one another.
- We expect our city officials to make support for these institutions and activities a priority because they enhance our quality of life.

5. DIVERSITY AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

We value the diversity of people, cultures, and experiences in our community.

- We value our rich historical heritage and respect the ancient cultures that inhabited our area before us, the many different cultures in our community now, and their rich cultural background.
- We value our resilience and our rugged, “western” spirit.
- We value the participation of all members of the community to share in our mutual heritage and want our city officials to be inclusive and transparent when making public decisions.
- We recognize that inequalities that exist can be addressed through education, government and economic development.

6. EDUCATION

We value education for all members of our community at all age levels. We recognize that young people are vital to the future of our community and that a good education is critical for their future success and that of our community.

- We recognize the importance of early childhood education to provide our children with a sound foundation for learning.
- We recognize the importance of a good education system to our local economy and future economic development.
- We acknowledge the necessity of increasing financial support of our educational system and that all of us need to pull together to support education and the schools in our community.
- We want public officials to partner with community members to implement programs which meet the diverse educational needs of our population and students.

7. BUSINESS

We value and support the diverse local independent small businesses in Cortez and the surrounding community.

- We value a strong economy that welcomes and encourages businesses while recognizing the challenges that a small town faces. .
- We expect our city government to support and facilitate the establishment of local businesses without creating unnecessary roadblocks.
- We expect city planning decisions that affect businesses and commercial development to honor the economic foundation that small businesses provide to the community.

8. AGRICULTURE

We value agriculture, and recognize that agriculture is, and has historically been, the economic and cultural backbone of our community.

- We recognize that agriculture contributes an important component to the fabric of our way of life in this community.
- We recognize the importance of local food production, both from large-scale farms to smaller, family-owned farms to our economy.
- We value the ability to access quality local food.
- We want city officials to honor the importance of agriculture as they plan for the future.

North Fork Valley

RURAL AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

We value our rural and natural environment that has an abundance of resources and opportunities for healthy living, quality food, work, recreation and connection to the land.

1. We value access to the natural resources of the environment, which includes the accessibility to public lands for hunting, fishing and recreation and the historical affordability of private land where we live, raise our families, and where much of our quality food comes from.
2. We value the wealth of resources in our environment that currently contribute to our primary economic sectors, such as coal mining, ranching, farming, and value added agricultural products.
3. We value the water resources, which are important for human consumption, agriculture, wildlife and recreation and are key to the long-term viability of our communities.
4. We value a rural lifestyle and the natural beauty in the North Fork Valley, which includes open space, vistas, dark night skies and a peaceful and relaxing environment.
5. We value the quality of our environment and many strive to manage and steward our natural resources locally and responsibly.
6. We recognize the value of our natural resources, including energy resources like biomass, coal, methane, water, sun and wind.

SMALL TOWN FEEL AND SENSE OF COMMUNITY

We value our small town feel and sense of community.

1. We value and desire to have safety in our valley, a place where our kids are safe, there is low crime, and everyone has a sense of security.
2. We value the welcoming and friendly people, and how many support each other in times of need, even if they come from different segments of the community.
3. We value our individual communities and groups, schools, and sports events that bring us together, social and religious organizations, volunteer/service opportunities, and the hard working and creative people who contribute to the towns and valley.
4. We recognize the importance to encourage the same friendliness, respect, and acknowledgement that people experience in their individual communities to others within this multi-community valley.
5. We value our families and often long standing personal and work relationships, seeing people we know on the street, as well as our ability to maintain our privacy.
6. We value the community resources we have, including our libraries, parks, radio station, pool, and schools while recognizing many would like more of these resources and higher quality services.

STEADY ECONOMY

We envision a steady economy with work opportunities and the ability to grow our traditional and emerging economic sectors.

1. We value the historical employment opportunities in the valley, including coal mining, agriculture, small businesses, and downtown businesses, as well as the jobs, money and resources they bring to our local economy.
2. We value our public lands and open space and how they contribute to our economy, including through tourism, hunting and fishing, severance payments, recreation and by attracting people who bring new jobs and resources to the valley. We recognize that historic access to private land has created a valuable source of current income in property sales and rentals.

3. We recognize the need to take responsibility and to plan/encourage the future economic/health of our local economy.
4. We recognize the importance of growing the diversity of job opportunities for people of all ages, including meaningful work, to “keep” the people who want to live here and directly address current underemployment.
5. We value the contributions of new and growing economic sectors, including the arts and value-added agricultural sector and the “Creative District” designation; the marketing and recognition of our quality foods and beverages and North Fork Valley brand; agri-tourism; the growth of internet businesses and importance of new telecommunications infrastructure; and the additional economic contributions coming from non-labor sources of income.
6. We value the growing retirement community who is socially active and contributes to the disposal income in the economy.
7. We value the opportunities people have to live using both innovative and traditional means of working within the economy, including bartering, trading and emerging gift economy.

FREEDOM, INDEPENDENCE AND PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

We value our freedom to live the way we choose, our independence and our personal responsibility to our communities.

1. We value the “freedom to be” who we are and live our lives how we want to without undo authority telling us otherwise. We recognize that the growing diversity of people with different interests, cultures, careers, lifestyles, thoughts and beliefs will require us to learn how to extend the “freedom to be” to people unlike ourselves.
2. We value the western heritage/code of conduct of determining our own future by balancing personal freedom and personal responsibility to our neighbors without having to look to laws to tell us how to behave.
3. We recognize that rules, laws or regulations also protect personal freedoms, constitutional and property rights. When applied in good faith and measure, rules can create fairness, avoid unnecessary conflict, protect and sustain property value, and create predictability in land use and the future look and feel of a town or county.
4. We value the self-sufficiency that comes with the freedom of having access to the land and its quality resources.

TRADITIONS AND HERITAGE

We honor our traditions and heritage while looking to the future.

1. We value and respect the traditions and heritage of the rural and natural environment, the sense of community and a small town feel, the economy, and of our western, rural environment that places importance on freedom, independence and personal responsibility.
2. We recognize that past is an important foundation on which to build the valley’s future.
3. We recognize that change is inevitable, and value the opportunity to take what’s important, leave behind what no longer works, and to envision a future for the valley that continues to make this place a unique and special place to live.