

PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDARS SAT 27 JUNE 2026 10am-noon

American Legion Auxiliary, Unit 28, is proud to host an opportunity for veterans to give their input on our hometown – Ephrata, Washington. We were recently approached to help garner veterans to be the first focus group for Ephrata Forward in their efforts to strengthen Ephrata ensuring a good place for veterans (those serving as well as those who have served) to raise their families.

What is “Ephrata Forward” you ask; well so did we. A brief explanation, provided by Sarah Morford, is pasted below.

“Ephrata Forward is comprised of the largest public service organizations in our community (City, Port, Hospital, School District, County, PUD, Grant Transit Authority, Chamber and Economic Development Council). The group meets monthly to align needs, identify shared challenges and work toward solutions advocating for a better Ephrata. Ultimately, the group is working on a five-year plan to move Ephrata forward.

Last year, we conducted an online survey asking Ephrata residents what they think of our community, what improvements they'd like to see, and what challenges our town faces. We are now conducting focus groups to confirm the survey findings and further explore areas needing more discussion. This will help us as we formulate our plan.”

Thanks to a grant, Ephrata Forward is able to have a consultant for this first focus group. The consultant has provided some questions ahead of time to help y'all formulate your answers.

1. How long have you lived in Ephrata, and how would you describe it to someone who's never been here — not just the geography, but its personality?
2. Several people in the survey said they're afraid of Ephrata becoming "another anonymous city" or "another Quincy." What makes Ephrata unique? What are its strengths?
3. How is Ephrata growing and changing, and how do you feel this change?
4. "Downtown is dying" came up in the survey. What does *dying* mean to people who said it — is it about empty buildings, safety, something social?
5. The youth survey showed youth focused on economic anxiety —jobs, housing, whether they can afford to stay here, and on recreation and social life. Does that resonate for you? How?
6. When something is happening in Ephrata — a city decision, a new program, an event — how do you actually find out about it, and who tends to get left out of that loop?
7. What does the community need that money alone can't fix?
8. What's something the survey probably missed — something people here feel strongly about but aren't being asked, or that you don't think decision-makers are hearing right now?

PLEASE JOIN US June 27th and provide input.