

The Maine Quality of Place Council

December 2008



Sketch by Bruce Kidman
Quality of Place Council Meeting
July 17, 2008

Key Recommendations in Proposed Legislation

- 1. Establish the Maine Quality of Place Council to act as a coordinating body for state and regional quality of place investment strategies.** The Council will work with other state agencies to recommend how they may align their laws, programs, and funding with the state and regional quality of place investment strategies.
- 2. Establish a fund for implementing regional quality of place investment strategies.** The fund will consist of any bond proceeds and public and private contributions received for its purpose. Applications for other state program funds will receive preference points if they are submitted as part of a regional quality of place investment strategy.
- 3. Direct regional development districts to create regional quality of place investment strategies.** Regions that have in place a federal Economic Development Administration comprehensive economic development strategy (CEDS) will create a quality of place investment strategy by engaging regional sector leaders, setting priorities, and leveraging public and private development activities and funds.



Winter Snowboarding, Bethel
Photo by Maine Office of Tourism



Fly Fishing
Photo by Jody Harris



Maine Conservation Corps
Photo by MCCC

"Since Maine's level of research and workforce are likely to remain small for some time, firms in almost every technical field must recruit most of their specialized work force from out of state. Maine's quality of place will be a key to attracting critical personnel. The work of the Governor's Quality of Place Council addresses these issues and should be considered an important part of Maine's R&D and cluster development efforts."

Maine Center for Business and Economic Research et al., Maine's Technology Sectors and Clusters: Status and Strategy, Maine Technology Institute, DECD, Augusta, (April 2008)

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"In today's world, entrepreneurship is critical for economic growth. In Maine, the shift away from larger manufacturing firms has led to an increase in the number of small, innovative businesses. More and more, entrepreneurship is becoming a cornerstone of Maine's economy....The cultivation of problem solving, risk-taking, innovation, and related skills leads to a population that is better equipped to handle all types of endeavors and situations, not just entrepreneurial ones."
Entrepreneurship Education and Training in Maine, (September 2008)

Amanda Rector,
Maine State Planning Office

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Governor Sets Policy to Promote Maine Quality of Place



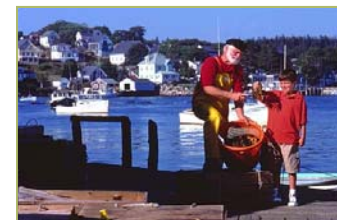
Governor John Baldacci and
Council Chair Richard Barringer

"Maine's principal advantage in today's global economic competition is our Quality of Place. We have majestic mountains, unbroken forests, open fields, wild rivers, pristine lakes, a widely-celebrated coast, picturesque downtowns, lively arts and culture, authentic historic buildings, and exceptional recreational opportunities. We must learn to think of them as the basic infrastructure of Maine's future prosperity."

Quality of Place and Job Growth: A New and Needed Maine Investment Strategy, 2nd Report of the Governor's Council on Maine's Quality of Place, (May 2008)

On June 6, 2008, Governor John Baldacci by Executive Order established the Maine Quality of Place Council and asked its members to create a Maine Quality of Place Jobs and Investment Strategy. The Executive Order continued the work of the Governor's Council on Maine's Quality of Place, whose research found that Maine's quality of place is an increasingly important economic driver, supporting high-value jobs, products, and services throughout Maine.

In signing the Executive Order, Governor Baldacci said, "Maine's Quality of Place is about protecting, investing in, and enhancing Maine's competitive economic advantage. Expanding our efforts and building an investment strategy around our outstanding assets and qualities will grow Maine's economy now and in the future."



Lobster Catch



Forest Ranger



Farmers' Market

Photos by Maine Office of Tourism

"We all love Maine's quality of place. It is why we live here....It turns out there is another reason to safeguard all these things. It is Maine's economy. The things we enjoy are things that people around the country and the world value....Keeping and strengthening what is special and distinctive about Maine, and attracting talented people, is a new kind of economic development challenge."

People, Place and Prosperity: 1st Report of the Governor's Council of Maine's Quality of Place, (December 2007)

(Note:) The December 2007 and May 2008 reports of the Governor's Council on Maine's Quality of Place, and the June 2008 Executive Order, appear at: <http://www.maine.gov/spo/specialprojects/qualityofplace/index.htm>

Maine Quality of Place Council Members

Richard Barringer,
Council Chair
Edward Barrett,
City of Bangor
David Cole,
Commissioner, MDOT
Martha Freeman,
Director, SPO
Eleanor Kinney,
Natural Resource Council of
Maine
Patrick McGowan,
Commissioner, DOC
Donna McNeil,
Maine Cultural Affairs Council
Matthew Polstein,
New England Outdoor Center
John Richardson,
Commissioner, DECD
Robert Thompson,
Exec. Director, AVCOG
Robin Zinchuk,
Bethel Area Chamber of
Commerce

State Planning Office Staff:

John DeVecchio, Tim Glidden,
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Mount Katahdin
Photo by Maine Office of Tourism

What is “Quality of Place?”

Maine possesses a globally-known “brand” based on our reputation for hardworking people and our State’s many lifestyle amenities. “Quality of Place” consists of those characteristics of a community or region that make it *distinctive* from other places and *attractive* as a place in which to retire, work, or visit. Quality of Place encompasses a community’s natural and built environment, traditional town and city centers, civic traditions, historic and cultural amenities, recreational opportunities, and access to these.

Some aspects of Maine’s Quality of Place are easy to identify, such as the postcard images of lakes, loons, lobsters, and lighthouses. Others are harder to pinpoint, but just as real — like the reputation for quality leveraged by the likes of L.L. Bean, the Maine Winter Sports Center, and Stonewall Kitchen.



Maine Winter Sports Center
Photo by Dennis Welsh

Why is Quality of Place Important to Maine’s Economic Prosperity?

Growing evidence supports the connection between Quality of Place and economic prosperity. Here is what our researchers have found.

- 1. Quality of Place is an economic good of real value.**
Places with distinct and attractive Quality of Place (Q of P) are increasingly scarce. Scarce goods have economic value that influences people’s financial decisions. Many people pay higher housing costs or accept lower incomes in order to live in regions with high Q of P.
- 2. Quality of Place strengthens a region’s economic prospects.**
Areas with strong Q of P demonstrate higher employment, population, and income growth. No evidence exists that areas with high Q of P amenities experience less economic growth.
- 3. Today’s high-growth industries value Quality of Place.**
Q of P is most important to businesses that rely on well-educated workers; it helps them attract and retain employees. Modern industries with workers who are attracted by Q of P have better long-term growth prospects than traditional manufacturing industries, many of which are projected to see job losses.
- 4. Quality of Place is an appealing framework for Maine development.**
Traditional economic development strategies focus on lowering business costs through supports and incentives. A Q of P strategy seeks to directly enhance the quality of life of all Maine residents, which is the ultimate goal of economic development.
- 5. Quality of Place is a complement to, not a substitute for, traditional economic development strategies.**
Businesses looking to expand or relocate consider Q of P when other production costs are similar across two or more competing locations. So, business costs, tax policy, transportation and telecommunication infrastructure, and workforce development remain important. Yet Maine today is well positioned to compete strongly based on Q of P, as well; several Maine communities have quickly turned Q of P amenities into economic opportunities. See www.maine.gov/spo/specialprojects/quality_ofplace/index.htm.



Maple Hill Farm, Hallowell
Photo by Scott Cowger

“Integrating landscape conservation within broader regional asset-based economic development strategies can expand the constituency and deepen the pool of resources for conservation.”

Regional Landscape Conservation in Maine: Best Practices for Enhancing Quality of Place in Maine, (September 2008) Brett Richardson, MCPD Candidate, Muskie School of Public Service

What is a Quality of Place Investment?

A Quality of Place investment is one that preserves, strengthens, markets, and builds economic opportunity on the place-based assets, both natural and built, that define the Maine “brand.” These are our

- open, natural landscapes;
- traditional town centers and downtowns;
- historic structures and resources;
- arts, culture, and creative economy;
- working waterfronts;
- infrastructure and traditions that support and provide access to these;
- private and nonprofit efforts to build job opportunities based upon these as attractants; and
- workforce development efforts to take advantage of their employment-generating potential.

Maine already has a variety of productive and promising quality of place investment initiatives underway; see www.maine.gov/spo/specialprojects/qualityofplace/index.htm.



Machias Lodge Lighthouse
Photo by MCP



Lakeside Orchard, Manchester
Photo by LMF

What Is a Quality of Place Jobs and Investment Strategy?

State and regional quality of place investment strategies are economic plans of action that build on exceptional and marketable local and regional strengths to create new high-value jobs, products, and services in Maine. They are needed complements to Maine’s traditional economic and community development programs.

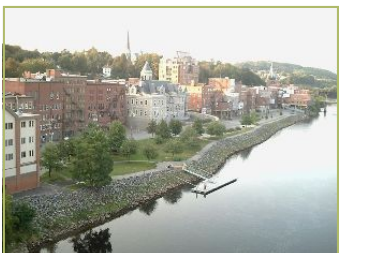
An effective quality of place investment strategy is locally-driven and involves broad cross-sections of people in decision-making. It must be market-based, regionally-organized, coordinated with and among state agencies, and effectively evaluated for performance.



Downtown Biddeford
Photo by SPO

“Strong local leadership and public-private collaboration are the key ingredients for successful downtown revitalization efforts. The need for strong local leadership and involvement of local merchants cannot be emphasized enough.”

Downtown Revitalization: Maine’s Downtown Quality of Place Investment Programs, (August 2008) Alison Worster, JD Candidate, University of Maine School of Law



Downtown Augusta
Photo by Terry Ross