

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BACKGROUND MATERIAL

Prepared for January 15, 2008, Meeting of the Governor's Council on Maine's Quality of Place

Public Utilities Hearing Room, 242 State Street, Augusta (panel convenes at 3:00 p.m.)

Scheduled Panelists: Rich Pattenaude, Chancellor, University of Maine System
John Fitzsimmons, President, Maine Community College System
Laura Fortman, Commissioner, Maine Department of Labor

On December 4, 2007, the Governor's Council on Maine's Quality of Place presented its first report to Governor John Baldacci. The last of its fifteen recommendations specifically pertains to workforce development:

Council Recommendation 15: Align Maine's Workforce Development System and Programs with Quality of Place Opportunities

"Maine's Quality of Place supports a broad range of Maine workers – from fishermen and guides who rely on the integrity of our natural environment, to manufacturers and retailers of our reputable quality products, to restaurant and hotel owners who serve our seasonal visitors to Maine's attractions. Yet, while all Maine residents may enjoy our Quality of Place, not all are able to benefit from its economic value and opportunity. The skills needed to turn Quality of Place into a livable wage are different from those valued by an economy based on natural resource extraction and traditional manufacturing. All Maine workers must have access to the education and training needed to turn their skills and Maine's Quality of Place into a secure and sustainable living..."

The Council also expressed the following concern, respecting "Good, Honest Design:"

"The Council agrees with one of (its) witnesses who has written that "the basic implication of (Maine's recent) economic growth patterns is a paradox: to retain Maine's special character as a place that feels closely connected with the natural environment, Maine people will have to pay much, much more attention to the built environment.... Mainers by and large are far more passionate about the natural than the built environment. A strong commitment to developing a Maine sense of design for the built environment, as architects such as John Calvin Stevens did, will make all the difference" to Maine's future Quality of Place. It is the Council's intention to explore with the Chancellor of the University of Maine System the possibility of creating capacity within the System to teach, research, and extend the best principles and practice of design for our landscapes and communities."

In addition, Maine now enjoys a national reputation for its expertise and skilled craftsmen in historic preservation and related trades (not only architectural and design people, but historic roofers, masons, timber-framers, etc). We need to preserve and enhance these skills. In addition, this is an educational opportunity that could attract people from all over the country.

For an economic strategy based on Quality-of-Place to succeed, Maine's workforce development system must produce leaders and skilled workers in at least three areas:

- **People to power the high-growth industries that Maine's Quality of Place is most likely to attract.** The Legislature has targeted the following high-growth industries to drive Maine's economic growth: precision manufacturing, marine technologies and aquaculture,

information technologies, biotechnology, agriculture and forest products, and advance materials manufacturing. These industries prefer to locate in areas with high Quality of Place, but only if they will find the necessary workforce. A forthcoming “clusters” study for the Maine Technology Institute argues the compelling need to use Maine’s Quality of Place to attract the highly skilled workers essential to successful technology development.

- **People to protect and enhance Maine’s Quality of Place.** Maine currently has strong leadership on natural resource issues and conservation. There is less leadership around issues affecting the built environment. Maine needs people with the skills to offer improved landscape design and architecture, and others with the skills to promote quality design through effective community planning and urban design.
- **People to professionalize the leisure and hospitality industry to a level that increases livable-wage opportunities.** This includes front-line workers with top-quality skills in customer service, communication, problem-solving, and cultural tolerance. It also includes small business operators with skills in management, product development and marketing.

The ability of Maine people to acquire these skills will depend on their access to relevant and well-designed education and training opportunities within their financial, geographic, and time constraints.

The Council invites the leaders of Maine’s public workforce development system to share your best thoughts and recommendations at this time respecting:

- 1. How your institutions may most effectively meet these challenges through teaching, research, and outreach;***
- 2. How best to transition from Maine’s traditional post-secondary programs to a strategy that focuses on Quality of Place, tourism, and the technology sectors; and***
- 3. How the Council may best support and advance these efforts in its final report to the Governor, in April.***