

## Quality of Place Findings

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### **1. Q of P is an economic good of real value.**

Places with distinct and attractive Quality of Place (“Q of P”) are scarce. Scarce goods have economic value that influences, and is revealed by, 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. Empirical evidence suggests that an attractive Q of P strengthens a region’s economic prospects.**

A significant body of research shows that areas with attractive Q of P experience higher employment, population, and income growth. Some research finds weaker connections than others, but no evidence exists that areas with high Q of P amenities experience less economic growth. Since Q of P entails a mixture of tangible and intangible factors, measuring it precisely is difficult and often subjective. However, scholarly interest in Q of P as an economic development strategy is growing.

### **3. Today’s high-growth industries value Q of P.**

Q of P factors are most important to businesses that rely on highly-educated workers, such as technology firms. Q of P helps them attract and retain employees. Technology and professional service industries have better long-term growth prospects than goods-producing industries, many of which are projected to decline.

### **4. Q of P is an appealing framework for economic development in Maine.**

Traditional economic development strategies focus on lowering business costs through subsidies and incentives. Q of P strategies seek to directly enhance the well-being of residents, which is the ultimate goal of economic development. It endorses elements of traditional strategies in areas like transportation, health care, and education.

### **5. Q of P is a complement to, not a substitute for, traditional economic development strategies.**

Businesses looking to expand or relocate usually consider Q of P when other production costs are similar across two or more competing locations. So tax policy, transportation and telecommunication infrastructure, and workforce qualifications are still important. However, Maine is well positioned to compete based on Q of P, not costs. Several Maine communities have turned local Q of P amenities into economic opportunity fairly quickly.

### **6. Within a Q of P framework, the value of Maine’s natural resources depends on accessibility.**

There are many ways to gain economic value from a region’s natural resources. Agriculture and extractive industries turn natural resources into raw commodities. Q of P strategies use natural resources for their aesthetic value and recreation opportunities. Without recreational access to the resources, their full economic value may not be realized. Therefore investment in nature-based infrastructure, such as hiking trails, camp sites, road signs, etc., is essential.

### **7. Successful Q of P initiatives are likely to be regional, strategic, and multidimensional.**

People live, work, and recreate within regions of multiple communities. Their perception of Q of P reflects the entire region. Therefore, each community’s Q of P choices affect its neighbors, and protecting or enhancing Q of P may only be done regionally. It must also be strategic, in terms of policy and investment. Different people – natives, retirees, tourists, etc. – assess Q of P slightly differently. The choice of target market should be grounded in economic realities. An effective Q of P strategy would consider all of Q of P’s many components, plus the traditional economic factors which must be in place before Q of P can influence businesses’ and individuals’ location decisions.