

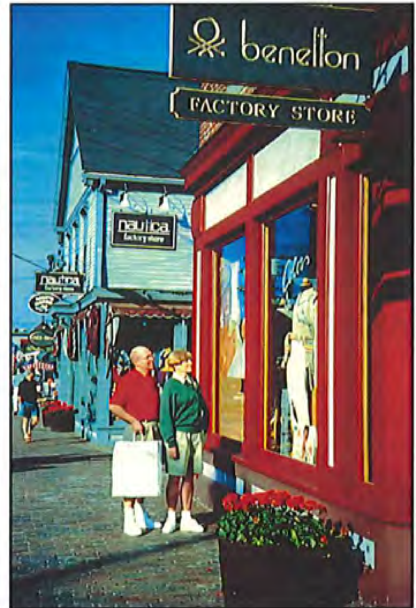
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# Quality of Place and Job Growth: *A New and Needed Maine Investment Strategy*



## Second Report of the Governor's Council on Maine's Quality of Place

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Submitted to Governor John E. Baldacci  
Augusta, Maine  
May 6, 2008

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May 6, 2008

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## Executive Summary

The Council's first report to Governor John Baldacci, dated December 4, 2007, has a purposeful title: *People, Place, and Prosperity*. These four words convey what the Council found in its research and observations: that a more *prosperous* Maine is directly and inextricably tied to the exceptional qualities of this *place*, our state, and to our ability in a competitive world to attract and keep *people*.

Here is why. Maine's traditional economy is forever changed. In years past, Maine inhabited a powerful economic niche tied to resource extraction and the use of our natural resources as commodities and inputs for manufacturing.

Maine's economy today focuses more on services, both lower- and higher-paying. Fast-food chains offer service jobs, and so do medical and professional services, boat and motor vehicle repair, media services, and computer programming and design. Manufacturing today requires more sophisticated technologies and greater worker skills, whether in the production of lumber, paper, boats, or bio-medicines.

Maine's principal advantage in today's global 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, and authentic historic buildings. We must learn to think of them as the basic infrastructure of Maine's future prosperity.

We are no longer a place set largely apart from the forces shaping the national and global economies. Maine today is engaged in a world-wide competition for people — people to create and sustain prosperity in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The Council has found that Maine's *chief* economic asset in this competition is our *Quality of Place*.

To understand what this means, think of your home in Maine. You may like your home because it's in a historic neighborhood near cultural amenities, or because it's in a quaint town surrounded by open space and recreational opportunities. You may like your home because you enjoy farming or gardening, because you love being by the coast or near a lake, or because you are inspired by your scenic views or your relationships with community members.

Our homes in Maine represent many values to us, just as do our historic downtowns and Maine landscapes of all kinds. But at times in our lives, a home's primary value becomes its economic one: we want to move and need to sell. How do we market our home? We fix it up, paint it up, polish it up, to show it in its best light. We attract prospective buyers by touting our home's architecture; its neighborhood or town location; its access to cultural, recreational, or community amenities; its views of sunsets, mountains, or open fields. We need to distinguish our home as of better quality than others we're competing with for a sale.

That's what we need to do for Maine's future prosperity. We must attract new "buyers"—visitors, retirees, businesses, and skilled workers — to Maine. Our distinctive, competitive advantage in a world that has become one giant economic neighborhood is Maine's spectacular, place-based, natural and built assets.



So, we must look to our historic downtowns, cultural amenities, forests, fields, mountains, lakes, rivers, and coast — and access to them — as resources we must husband and market to keep and attract business, skilled workers, visitors, and retirees. To market these place-based assets effectively, we must ensure investment in their well-being and improvement. We must learn to think of them as the basic infrastructure of Maine’s sustainable prosperity — much as our highways and bridges are among today’s basic infrastructure, requiring continuing maintenance and investment.

This, then, is the Council’s goal, to which its recommendations are directed: to protect and strengthen our outstanding Quality of Place. To do so, we propose to add to our traditional approaches to creating prosperity for Maine people a new and needed development tool — a Quality of Place Investment Strategy (QPIS).

The Council proposes to add to our traditional approaches to creating economic prosperity a new and needed approach — a Quality of Place Investment Strategy.

To this end, the Council offers ten recommendations that build directly upon its earlier report:

#### **A. Maine Quality of Place Investment Strategy: Using Quality of Place to Drive Job Growth**

1. For sustainable prosperity, the State must develop and implement a Maine Quality of Place Investment Strategy (QPIS) that will protect, strengthen, and build economic opportunity upon Maine’s Quality of Place assets, both natural and built.

#### **B. Workforce Development and Quality of Place**

2. The University of Maine System (UMS) is strongly urged to designate hospitality and leisure as “a critical discipline” within the new *UMS Agenda for Action*, and to aggressively pursue tourism workforce and product development, education, research, and outreach.
3. The UMS Center for Tourism Research and Outreach (CentTRO) is well-conceived and positioned to lead the effort to develop a statewide strategy for tourism workforce and product development, by catalyzing state-wide dialogue.
4. The Maine Community College System is urged to add hospitality and leisure to the list of areas in which it will focus workforce education and training under its new *Rural Initiative*.
5. The Maine tourism industry, itself, is strongly encouraged to assume a leadership role in strengthening and resourcing Maine’s tourism workforce and product development strategy.
6. The University of Maine System is urged, as well, to designate community planning and architectural design as a “critical discipline” within the *UMS Agenda for Action* and, to develop related education, research, and outreach capacity.

7. The Maine Community College System should add to its existing offerings training in historic preservation, high-quality building techniques, and traditional and contemporary crafts art.
8. Greater Portland Landmarks (through its Center for Architecture and Preservation), the Maine Historic Preservation Commission, and Maine Preservation should collaborate to develop historic and neighborhood preservation training for local planning boards and state agency staff working with the built environment.

#### **C. Private Landowners and Public Access**

9. The State is urged to support and strengthen its Maine Landowner Relations Program (MLRP) to ensure continuing public access to private land.

#### **D. Community and Downtown Vitality**

10. The Governor and Legislature are urged to adopt a clear, unequivocal policy statement in support of Maine community and downtown revitalization.

With these recommendations, together with those from its first report, the Council offers a way to realize the full potential of Maine's Quality of Place as a driver of economic opportunity and sustainable prosperity for all Maine people. If they are acted upon, the purposes for which this Council was created will be achieved: that is, Maine's outstanding Quality of Place will be more secure for ourselves, for future generations, and for all who benefit from it; and its potential to generate significant economic opportunities for Maine people will be realized.

# Introduction

In fall 2006 the Brookings Institution reported that, after painful industrial restructuring and amid surprising negativism, Maine is today poised for a new era of prosperity “if it takes bold action and focuses its limited resources on a few critical investments.” For sustainable Maine prosperity, Brookings recommended a three-fold strategy of investing in product and service innovation, streamlining government at all levels, and revitalizing our towns and cities while protecting our rural landscapes.

With regard to the last element, Brookings asserts:

*Accessible wild places and tranquil country farms, human-scaled Main Streets and working waterfronts: these are what differentiate Maine from other places and in many respects drive its economy. Yet these assets are at risk. Development is encroaching on Maine’s coastal (waters) and inland lakes, limiting access. Rising land prices are motivating farmers to sell out. And closer in, the state’s longstanding centers — its regional hubs and their downtowns — cannot often enough stem the flow of suburbanization to truly revitalize themselves. These centers like the green landscape cry out for investment. And so Maine should protect these assets and invest in them as sources of economic advantage.<sup>1</sup> (emphasis added)*

In spring 2007 Governor John E. Baldacci created the Governor’s Council on Maine’s Quality of Place to explore these matters in depth. The Executive Order creating the Council states in part:

*WHEREAS*, in order to ensure sustainable development the state must protect and invest in the assets and amenities that comprise Maine’s quality places — our diverse communities, our natural resources, our scenic landscapes, the built-environment, the arts and culture, and the infrastructures that support them ...;

*THE COUNCIL SHALL:*

1. Examine the state’s public programs, decision-making processes, investment practices, private market incentives, institutional capacities, and research efforts to assess their readiness to maintain Maine’s distinctiveness as a desirable place to live, to work, to raise a family, and to build a useful and productive life;
2. Develop a recommended action plan or plans for protecting, investing in, and enhancing Maine’s distinctive quality of place, including creative ways and means to finance such plans;
3. Propose structures, institutions, processes, programs, activities, and investments that will ensure the long-term protection and enhancement of Maine’s quality of place; and
4. Propose coordination with and among the actions of existing and recommended public, private, and nonprofit “quality of place” efforts in Maine.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The Brookings Institution. Charting Maine’s Future: An Action Plan for Promoting Sustainable Prosperity and Quality Place, Washington DC, 2006, pp. 6, 96, 99.

<sup>2</sup> Executive Order 29 FY 06/07 dated March 13, 2007.



The Council has met thirteen times in various Maine locations, undertaken extensive research, and listened closely to the Brookings Institution staff; to Maine's various economic, planning, business, tourism, creative economy, transportation, landscape protection, historic preservation, and downtown revitalization communities; and to its own staff.

In its first report the Council offered initial findings and fifteen recommendations in the areas of regional landscape protection, community and downtown revitalization, and a new and needed investment strategy for Maine development. The Council also expressed a number of compelling issues that it identified as "concerns."<sup>3</sup> In this, its second and final report, the Council reaffirms and builds directly upon these findings, recommendations, and concerns, and deepens them.

Section I of this report examines the connection between Maine's Quality of Place and economic growth and prosperity. Section II offers recommendations in the areas of state development policy, workforce development, public access to private lands, and community and downtown revitalization that expand upon the Council's earlier recommendations and concerns. Follow-on tasks from the Council's first report are listed in Section III, with location of responsibility for their timely address.

Appendix A offers language to implement the Council's proposed Quality of Place Investment Strategy through executive order or legislation. Appendix B provides a brief summary of the findings, recommendations, and concerns expressed in the Council's first report.

The Council takes special note of Congressman Michael Michaud's proposal for the Northern Border Regional Commission.<sup>4</sup> Now enacted by the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate, the Northern Border Regional Commission will comprise the four northern forest states' governors<sup>5</sup> and one federal representative. When signed into law, it will initially distribute \$40 million annually in federal funds to economically-distressed areas, to support asset-based economic and community development.<sup>6</sup> The Council believes the Northern Border Regional Commission will complement and greatly advance Maine's Quality of Place Investment Strategy.

Finally, members of the Council again express our deepest appreciation and gratitude to Governor John Baldacci for this opportunity to be of service to Maine, and for his strong commitment to these important matters; to all the citizens of Maine and elsewhere who helped to educate us; and to our outstanding State Planning Office staff and additional contributors for their time, talent, and devotion to this effort.

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<sup>3</sup> The full text of the Council's earlier findings, recommendations, and concerns may be found in People, Place, and Prosperity: 1<sup>st</sup> Report of the Governor's Council on Maine's Quality of Place, December 4, 2007, at [www.maine.gov/spo/qualityofplace](http://www.maine.gov/spo/qualityofplace). They are summarized in Appendix B to this report.

<sup>4</sup> The legislation was co-sponsored by Rep. Tom Allen, and Senators Olympia Snowe and Susan Collins introduced companion legislation in the Senate.

<sup>5</sup> Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, and New York

<sup>6</sup> See Perkins, Deb. Lewiston Sun Journal. "Michaud Bill Provides Vision for Northern Forests," October 21, 2007.

## I. Quality of Place as an Economic Asset

Perhaps the most important insight of the Brookings report is that the three elements of the strategy they propose — invest in jobs and innovation, streamline government, and safeguard Maine's Quality of Place — do *not* operate separately, independent of one another, but only as *a system*. That is, while each element is important in its own right, the power of the three together — their ability to achieve the goal of sustainable Maine prosperity — lies in their *connectedness* to and mutual dependence on one another.



This is how *systems* work in real life —from the human body and families to the solar system — each organ, each member, each planet influences the other; and change in any one, positive or negative, results in certain change to the others. So, when we invest in Quality of Place, we are investing in jobs and innovation; when we streamline government, we make Maine more attractive to investment; and when we invest in innovation, we strengthen Maine's Quality of Place.

Historically, we focused on needed investment in jobs and equipment, in the fond hope this would bring a high quality of life as a secondary benefit. Today, we know it works both ways: when we safeguard and strengthen our quality places, we increase the likelihood of attracting the investment and people we need. In fact, *unless* we protect those places, the investment and people are likely to come not at all!

Unless we protect our quality places, economic investment and people are not likely to come to Maine.

This is expressed in compelling terms in the recent analysis of Maine's R&D strategy for the Maine Technology Institute and Maine Department of Economic and Community Development. It concludes that Maine's ability to attract and keep highly-skilled workers is critical to growing and sustaining our most promising industries:

*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.<sup>7</sup>*

In the modern economy, prosperity comes from the ideas, talents, and energy of people. Today, skilled workers, entrepreneurs, tourists, and retirees do not *have* to come to Maine, they may go *anywhere*. Where they choose to work, visit, and live depends on their personal preferences and the appeal of their destination. Maine's advantage in this global competition for people is our Quality of Place.<sup>8</sup>

### **Quality of Place Initiatives Build on Local and Regional Strengths**

To better understand how initiatives based on Quality of Place create economic opportunity, the Council and its staff reviewed both scholarly literature and real-world experience from Maine and across the nation. In particular, the Council examined the successful development initiatives of the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), which helps communities identify and leverage local assets to create jobs and build prosperity while preserving community character.<sup>9</sup>

Quality of Place translates to job opportunities through what is known as *asset-based development*. This is a strategy that first identifies a region's strengths and marketable assets: the skills and abilities of its residents, organizations, businesses, and institutions; and its exceptional natural and cultural resources. It then designs initiatives to build upon these strengths and create new job opportunities by enhancing them, by combining them in new and productive ways, and by marketing them effectively.

This approach complements traditional "needs-based" development that first identifies shortcomings and then designs measures to make up for what the region lacks. A needs-based strategy alone is not sufficient to maintain and strengthen Quality of Place assets. An effective strategy will consider both the traditional economic incentives and Quality of Place strategies that need to be in place.

An asset-based development strategy is needed to effectively maintain and strengthen Quality of Place assets.

A Quality of Place development strategy is best done regionally, with strong local input. Initiatives must gather diverse interests and persons — businesses, landowners, recreationists, conservationists, artists, historians, tourism operators, etc. — who best understand their region's strengths. The development and marketing of Quality of Place assets, especially natural resource assets, must balance the impact of increased asset use with economic opportunity. It is important then, that local people come together around a vision, a plan, and a strategy to protect and build upon their marketable, local and regional Quality of Place assets.

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<sup>7</sup> Maine Center for Business and Economic Research (University of Southern Maine), Battelle Institute, Planning Decisions, Inc., and Policy One Research, Maine's Technology Sectors and Clusters: Status and Strategy, Maine Technology Institute, DECD, Augusta, April 2008, p. 21.

<sup>8</sup> For a thorough review of current research into this question, see Reilly, Catherine, and H. Renski, Place and Prosperity, Maine State Planning Office, Augusta, June 2007, at [www.maine.gov/spo/qualityofplace](http://www.maine.gov/spo/qualityofplace)

<sup>9</sup> Appalachian Regional Commission. Asset-based Development Initiative, <http://www.arc.gov/>





Photo by Dennis Welsh, Maine Winter Sports Center

#### Maine Winter Sports Center

Web: [www.maineWSC.org](http://www.maineWSC.org)

Its strong skiing tradition is proving a new economic driver in northern Maine's St. John Valley. In 1999, a small group of individuals started the Maine Winter Sports Center (MWSC) in Fort Kent with a grant from the Libra Foundation. With the help of hundreds of volunteers, it has already hosted national and international cross-country ski and biathlon events. The 2004 Biathlon World Cup was seen by over 40 million viewers worldwide, and by 20,000 spectators in the Maine stadium. In the 2005-06 season, MWSC athletes represented 70% of the US Olympic Biathlon team and three more qualified for the Biathlon Junior World Championships. The MWSC has also built cross-country ski trails at local schools state-wide, with equipment, training, and coaching for students free of charge. By the end of the 2008 ski season, MWSC expects to have more than 5,000 school children on skis in 96 communities throughout the state.

### Some Lessons from Maine Quality of Place Initiatives

Without necessarily knowing it, numerous, forward-thinking Maine organizations and communities have adopted Quality of Place investment strategies to foment economic opportunity. Some examples — Maine Winter Sports Center, Maine Huts & Trails, Friends of Fort Knox, Downtown Bangor, and Maine North Star Alliance Initiative — are briefly described in this report.<sup>10</sup> From these examples, we learn that through ingenuity and investment, regional Quality of Place assets may become the basis for important job growth. Further,

- Quality of Place job growth is made possible through the energetic participation of private citizens and the public, private, and nonprofit sectors, working together, each doing what it does well.
- The results need not be long in coming when such investment is applied to Quality of Place assets.
- Quality of Place assets are place-specific, and must be assessed with care for their quality, authenticity, sustainability, and marketability.
- If these assets are to translate into good job opportunities, they must not be merely good, but recognized as indisputably better than anything else in the regional marketplace.
- Leadership matters. In each case, the vision, commitment, and communication and collaboration skills associated with effective leadership were necessary to success.

<sup>10</sup> A more elaborate description of each case is available in Amanda Rector, et al. Quality of Place & Job Growth: Selected Maine Cases at [www.maine.gov/spo/qualityofplace](http://www.maine.gov/spo/qualityofplace)



## **II. Recommendations**

### ***A. A Maine Quality of Place Investment Strategy: Using Quality of Place to Drive Job Growth***

The Council believes that Maine has much to gain by going beyond its traditional economic development efforts to emphasize and build upon our place-based strengths — our extraordinary landscape and natural attractions, our charming villages and downtowns, our authentic arts and crafts, our culture and historic heritage, and our strong research and educational institutions.

To this end, the Council offers the following recommendations:

**Recommendation 1: For sustainable prosperity, the State must develop and implement a Maine Quality of Place Investment Strategy (QPIS) that will protect, strengthen, and build economic opportunity upon Maine's Quality of Place assets, both natural and built.**

Specific language to implement this strategy is presented in Appendix A to this report. It proposes to:

- a. create regional Quality of Place councils to identify each region's key assets, establish strategic priorities, and develop initiatives to take best advantage of its place-based strengths;
- b. call upon the executive agencies of Maine state government to align their missions in support of Maine's Quality of Place Investment Strategy and develop a blueprint to implement their alignment; and
- c. reconfigure and reallocate existing state and federal resources to fund the effort.

### ***B. Workforce Development and Quality of Place***

In its first report to the Governor, the Council recognized that while all Maine residents may enjoy our Quality of Place, not all are able to benefit from its economic value and potential. It stated that 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 has since met with Chancellor Richard Pattenau of the University of Maine System (UMS), President John Fitzsimmons of the Maine Community College System (MCCS), and Commissioner Laura Fortman of the Maine Department of Labor, and Council staff have consulted with others in the Maine higher education and worker training communities about these matters.

#### **1. Hospitality & Leisure**

Tourism is today among Maine's largest and strongest industries; maintaining this position requires that Maine remain a highly desirable tourist destination. This means not only

protecting the natural and cultural attractions that draw visitors to Maine, but providing top-quality products and services when they arrive. Businesses that make a visitor's stay positive and memorable help translate Maine's Quality of Place into economic opportunity. The quality of Maine's tourism businesses and workforce is, therefore, as important as the quality of our natural and cultural attractions.

Maine's current workforce development system lacks significant resources and a comprehensive strategy for providing the needed education and training to entrepreneurs, managers, and employees working in the tourism industry.



#### Maine Huts & Trails

Web: [www.mainehuts.org](http://www.mainehuts.org)

Maine Huts & Trails (MH&T), a non-profit organization, is building a 180-mile non-motorized recreational corridor from Bethel to Moosehead Lake with 12 huts positioned a day's hike apart to warm, feed, and lodge trail users. The first lodge, near Poplar Stream Falls in Carrabassett Valley, opened to skiers on February 15, 2008. MH&T has launched a \$10 million capital fundraising campaign and acquired or through easement or lease has use of half the trail miles needed. As people use the western Maine huts and trails, economic benefit will come to the region. The MH&T hopes that visitors for generations to come will experience the wonders of the outdoors in a uniquely Maine venue.

Photo by Dennis Welsh, Hut at Poplar Stream Falls, Carrabassett Valley

Other states with strong hospitality and leisure sectors have successful systems for educating and training industry personnel. The University of Minnesota's Tourism Center, for example, offers certificate and degree programs, and conducts research on tourism "success and sustainability" as well as outreach on best practices to businesses throughout the state. The Center receives funding from state, federal, and philanthropic sources, as well as chambers of commerce and individual businesses involved in the state's tourism industry. Therefore,

**Recommendation 2: The University of Maine System (UMS) is strongly urged to designate hospitality and leisure as "a critical discipline" within the new *UMS Agenda for Action*, and to aggressively pursue tourism workforce and product development, education, research, and outreach.**

As a land grant university, the University of Maine's founding purpose was to help Maine residents leverage economic value from our natural resources. At its creation, this was done primarily through natural resource extraction, agriculture, and manufacturing. Now, Maine's natural resources and amenities create economic opportunities by attracting visitors and new residents. The skills needed to translate that attraction into a livable wage are different from those valued by an economy based on natural resource extraction and traditional manufacturing. Maine's workforce development system must evolve accordingly.



**Recommendation 3: The UMS Center for Tourism Research and Outreach (CenTRO) is well-conceived and positioned to lead the effort to develop a statewide strategy for tourism workforce and product development, by catalyzing state-wide dialogue.**

In 2005, the State and the University of Maine System (UMS) created CenTRO to become a hub for tourism research, education, and outreach throughout Maine. For a variety of reasons, CenTRO has not to now been able fully to assume this role.

Of all existing Maine organizations and institutions, CenTRO remains best positioned to lead an effort to enhance tourism-related development opportunities. CenTRO recently convened a broad group of tourism operators and educators and researchers from the state's public universities and community colleges to assess tourism-related, workforce development needs; its findings will be issued shortly. The Council strongly supports CenTRO's efforts to foster a comprehensive and coordinated effort for tourism research, education, training, and outreach within UMS and related efforts to expand the capacities of Maine's community colleges and workforce training organizations.

**Recommendation 4: The Maine Community College System is urged to add hospitality and leisure to the list of areas in which it will focus workforce education and training under its new *Rural Initiative*.**

The MCCS recently announced a new *Rural Initiative* to increase educational opportunities and workforce skills in Maine's rural areas. Funded with generous gifts from the Bernard Osher Foundation, TD Banknorth, and the Betterment Fund, this effort will bring more scholarships, distance learning, access for high school students to the community colleges, and targeted degree offerings to remote parts of the state.

As part of any development strategy, hospitality and leisure offers great potential for our rural communities, especially in nature-, adventure-, culture- and heritage-based tourism. All Maine will benefit from efforts to enhance the skills of the industry's front-line employees in customer service, communication, problem-solving, foreign languages, and cultural tolerance.

**Recommendation 5: The Maine tourism industry, itself, is strongly encouraged to assume a leadership role in strengthening and resourcing Maine's tourism workforce and product development strategy.**

Developing and sustaining a statewide effort for tourism workforce development requires the commitment of increasing amounts of public, private, and philanthropic resources. Ensuring that CenTRO's education and outreach efforts support the industry's needs requires close dialogue, careful oversight, and substantial financial support. Therefore, the involvement, support, and leadership of Maine's tourism industry are indispensable to this effort.

The involvement, support, and leadership of Maine's tourism industry are indispensable to enhancing tourism economic opportunities as part of Maine's Quality of Place.

Such leadership would emulate the foresight shown by Maine's forest products industry in the creation in 1975 of the Cooperative Forestry Research Unit (CFRU) at the University of



Maine. The CFRU is a partnership among large forest landowners, environmental groups, and the University, whose common goal is “to solve the most important problems facing the managers of Maine’s forests.” Each year, CFRU receives roughly \$500,000 from forest landowners. Contributions by the tourism industry to CenTRO could range from paid internships and scholarships to targeted program support and endowed chairs in disciplines that the industry itself identifies as critical to its long-term needs. The industry should work with UMS to advance any needed changes to CenTRO’s mission and structure to replicate the success of CRFU.

## 2. Good Design

In its first report, the Council agreed with one of its witnesses that, by and large, Mainers today are far more passionate about the natural than the built environment. Yet recent growth patterns on the landscape show that “*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... A strong commitment to developing a Maine sense of design for the built environment will make all the difference*” to its present and future Quality of Place.<sup>11</sup>

To retain Maine’s special natural environment, Maine people will have to pay more attention to the built environment.

Maine has skilled tradespeople who specialize in historic preservation techniques (masonry, plaster work, slate roofing, wood finishing, cabinetry, etc.). While this resource represents an opportunity, Maine has precious few university and community college programs that address the built environment and community design. Therefore,

**Recommendation 6: The University of Maine System is urged, as well, to designate community planning and architectural design as a “critical discipline” within the UMS Agenda for Action, and to develop related education, research, and outreach capacity.**

In this regard, the Council strongly supports enhancing the undergraduate architectural studies program at the University of Maine at Augusta and the professional community planning and development program at the University of Southern Maine.

Sustaining Maine’s Quality of Place will require a level of attention to the built environment equal to the resources devoted to preserving Maine’s natural environment. The University of Maine System has traditionally supported programs related to natural resources; it must now help students and citizens learn how to design and shape our landscapes, buildings, neighborhoods, and communities.

The University of Maine System must build on its present core programs to complement the work of Maine’s private design community. In particular, program offerings should focus on sustainable design, with an emphasis on historic buildings. The Council urges the System to prepare a multi-year investment strategy to expand education, research, and outreach in the

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<sup>11</sup> Charles Colgan, “Maine’s Changing Economy: The Rise of ‘Urban Maine,’” in R. Barringer, ed., Changing Maine, 1960-2010, Tilbury House, Gardiner ME, 2004, pp. 44 and 48.



planning and design professions in Maine, including not only undergraduate and professional degrees, but educational programs directed toward citizens and public officials involved in community planning, architectural design, and historic preservation.

**Recommendation 7: The Maine Community College System should add to its existing degree offerings training in historic preservation, high-quality building techniques, and traditional and contemporary craft arts.**

Teaching historic preservation techniques will expand the pool of skilled workers needed to enhance the quality of our built environment, and is an area that could well become a nationally competitive advantage for Maine.

The Council praises the Maine Community College System's recent *Rural Initiative* to enhance skills in rural areas and increase incomes. Historic preservation is particularly apt in rural and small-town Maine, where development has been slower and very many historic structures remain intact. The *Rural Initiative* might thus meet the dual objectives of addressing the educational needs of rural Maine while supplying the skills employers need.



**Friends of Fort Knox**

Web: <http://fortknox.maineinfo.com/>

Historic Fort Knox, located on the Penobscot River opposite Bucksport and bolstered by the new Penobscot Narrows Observatory, has expanded the value of the historical, cultural, and natural assets of the area into a major regional attraction for tourists and local residents. With over 100,000 visitors, public use at the state historic site more than doubled in the year following the opening of the Penobscot Narrows Observatory. Community support and interest has grown significantly with the addition of the observatory, and the bridge has captured the interest of media world-wide. The Friends of Fort Knox organize and host an annual slate of special events including Scottish tattoos, Civil War re-enactments, cannon firings, pirate days, and medieval tournaments.

Photo by Leslie Wombacher, Fort Knox and Penobscot Narrows Bridge

Several of Maine's community college campuses have excellent programs in building and construction trades. A pilot program in Traditional and Contemporary Craft Arts at Eastern Maine Community College offers a model for training in quality building design and historic preservation.

Finally, the MCCS should develop a certificate in historic preservation for tradespersons and others concerned with historic preservation skills. When and if contractor licensing is required in Maine, the Legislature should include historic preservation as part of the training and certification required for a contractor license.

**Recommendation 8: Greater Portland Landmarks (through its Center for Architecture and Preservation), the Maine Historic Preservation Commission, and Maine Preservation should collaborate to develop historic and neighborhood preservation training for local planning boards and state agency staff working with the built environment.**



Many local decisions impact the character and quality of our built environment. While some layperson's training is available through the Maine Municipal Association and the Muskie School's certificate program, there is no training that shows *how* local government actions affect the quality and livability of the built environment. The Council urges that this new training be broadly promoted and that the State Planning Office explore how it might be offered.

The Greater Portland Landmark's Center for Architecture and Preservation might serve as a useful model in this regard. The Center, for which a capital campaign is now underway, will provide a venue for exhibitions, educational activities, and community discussions to safeguard the Maine heritage of vibrant and historically-distinctive architecture and community design.

### ***C. Private Landowners and Public Access***

In its earlier report, the Council recommended that the State identify means to encourage private landowners to continue the great Maine tradition of public access to their lands, and supported public education efforts to ensure respectful use of private lands by the public. Maine people and visitors benefit in many ways — not least, economically — from this tradition. Many of the characteristics essential to Maine's Quality of Place depend on the continuing willingness of private landowners to keep their property undeveloped and open to public access and use.

Many of the characteristics essential to Maine's Quality of Place depend on the continuing willingness of private landowners to keep their property undeveloped and open to public use.

Council members and staff met with representatives of Maine's private landowners, large and small, of sportsman's interests, and of state government, to explore this complex matter. These conversations and further staff research affirm the important role private landowners play in Maine's economy by allowing the public access to their land, and endorse the need for new and creative approaches to help ensure that this tradition continues.<sup>12</sup>

#### **Recommendation 9: The State is urged to support and strengthen its Maine Landowner Relations Program (MLRP), to ensure continuing public access to private land.**

No other program is so critical to the State's effort to recognize and support private landowners' role in protecting Maine's Quality of Place. The State should strengthen this effort by making the newly-created MLRP director position permanent and securing additional resources for education and outreach.

In addition, the Council supports creative approaches and means to sustain and strengthen the Maine tradition of unhindered and responsible public access to private land. To this end, the Council recommends that the MLRP staff, with the help of interested parties, further explore:

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<sup>12</sup> The full research report to the Council by staff economist Michael LeVert, Public Access to Maine's Private Lands: A Cultural and Economic Asset, is at [www.maine.gov/spo/qualityofplace](http://www.maine.gov/spo/qualityofplace). The Council highly recommends it as the departure point for any further exploration of its recommendations in this regard.



- Creating a permanent, public education campaign on the many benefits and personal responsibilities that come with public access to Maine private land;
- Continuing the Maine Warden Service's enforcement priority on issues of trespass and property abuse, recognizing that new funding may well be needed; and
- New and creative ways to symbolically reward private landowners for allowing public access; the feasibility of and potential funding for a Property Damage Mitigation Fund for legitimately aggrieved landowners; and the effectiveness and appropriateness to Maine of other states' market-based strategies to secure public access to private lands.

Each of these issues needs the most careful consideration. Effective responses will require a long-term commitment, adequate funding, and active support from all those affected — private landowners, public recreationists, natural resource agencies, and others. At the same time, the Council urges the greatest care and caution in any consideration of direct cash payments to landowners for temporary public access, lest these undermine the existing culture of extensive and permissive public access.

A stakeholder group, perhaps jointly chaired by the MLRP director and the chair of the Landowners and Sportsmen Relations Advisory Board, might examine these issues in the detail they require.

## ***D. Community and Downtown Vitality***

In its December report, the Council advocated strongly for passage of a uniform, statewide building code (LD 2257) and expansion of the state's historic preservation tax credit (LD 262). Both were enacted in the Second Regular Session of the 123rd Legislature, strengthening prospects for downtown redevelopment and rehabilitation of historic structures all across Maine.

Maine's historic downtowns and community centers are a cornerstone of Maine's Quality of Place.

On January 1, 2010, Maine will have new statewide building and energy code. A new state board will streamline code administration and a uniform code will bring more predictability and consistency to builders,



### **Reinventing Downtown Bangor**

Web: [www.downtownbangor.com/](http://www.downtownbangor.com/)

Following the closing of Dow Air Force Base in 1968 and the advent of the Bangor Mall a decade later, downtown Bangor fell on hard times; by the late 1980's it was but a shell of its former self. The City established a nonprofit corporation to direct redevelopment and generate creative approaches to its funding. The corporation then worked to invest in public parking, promote arts and culture, and attract specialty stores and restaurants. Today, arts and cultural venues such as the Maine Discovery Museum, the University of Maine's Museum of Art, the Bangor Opera House, and the Bangor Museum and Center for History are downtown "anchors." Between 2000 and 2007, occupancy rates downtown increased from 79% to 89%, with new offices, government buildings, restaurants, entertainment venues, and residential housing.

Photo by Bangor Daily News, Bangor Folk Festival



developers, and towns. The Legislature also enacted new and expanded incentives for redeveloping historic structures, including a tax credit for qualified historic projects that create new affordable housing. The new provisions will go into affect in July 2008.

The Council sees a compelling need to support Maine's historic downtowns and community centers as a cornerstone of Maine's Quality of Place, and to assure that development policies across state government protect and strengthen this extraordinary heritage. Yet, there is today no clear statement in law on the State's commitment to this asset.

**Recommendation 10: The Governor and Legislature are urged to adopt a clear, unequivocal policy statement in support of Maine community and downtown revitalization.**

The Council offers the following statement for policymakers' consideration:

*"Whereas, downtowns and community centers are part of Maine's unique Quality of Place, and serve not only as economic engines of our regions but as social and cultural centers, historic places, civic hubs, and homes to families and businesses; and*

*Whereas, our downtowns and community centers are diverse, distinctive venues that attract residents, young people, entrepreneurs, visitors, and retirees to their enjoyment; and*

*Whereas, our downtowns and community centers are regional centers that provide a setting for dwellings, services, and commerce; keep sprawling developing in check; and enhance rural landscapes; and*

*Whereas, our downtowns and community centers are economic assets critical to the State's overall economic health and that of the regions they serve; and*

*Whereas, Maine must have a robust, far-reaching effort to increase the vitality of our downtowns and community centers;*

*Now, therefore, be it resolved that Maine state government shall support and coordinate downtown revitalization efforts as a cornerstone of the Maine Quality of Place Investment Strategy."*



**Maine North Star Alliance Initiative**

Web: [www.maine.gov/wired](http://www.maine.gov/wired)

Maine's 400-year tradition in boat-building and marine trades is a particular asset when combined with its new capabilities in composites manufacture. The North Star Alliance Initiative (NSAI) creates new, sustainable economic and job opportunities by combining these assets in the boatbuilding, marine, and composites industries. Activities underway include funding to create a research and development hub for the composites industry at the University of Maine; employee training and customized management training for small and growing companies; curriculum and instructor certification for boat school programs across the state; and a branding and marketing campaign for Maine-made boats.

Photo by Billy Black, the *Mako*, a new, high-tech assault boat for the Navy Seals, built at Hodgdon Yachts in East Boothbay



### III. Follow-on Tasks and Assignments from the Council's First Report

The Council here notes the remaining recommendations and concerns from its first report and indicates responsibility for their implementation and a timeline for completion.

**1. Continuing funding stream for LMF:** The Council recommends surveying alternative funding mechanisms used in other states and exploring the feasibility of a continuing funding stream for the Land for Maine's Future program.

Lead: Tim Glidden, SPO

Tasks and Timeline: Recommendations prepared for the 2009 legislative session.

**2. Community preservation bond language:** The Council recommends that a Maine Community Preservation program, with an administrative structure similar to that of the Land for Maine's Future Board, be capitalized with bond issues over several years totaling \$50-100 million, to rehabilitate Maine's historic structures and fund related community improvements such as sidewalks, lighting, and public spaces.

Lead: Jody Harris, SPO

Tasks and Timeline: Draft language prepared for the 2009 legislative session.

**3. Align the State's major land use laws for mutual consistency and coherence in support of Maine's Quality of Place:** The Council recommends an effort among agencies of jurisdiction to review these several laws and make recommendations for changes needed to sustain and enhance Maine's Quality of Place.

Lead: Sue Inches, SPO

Tasks and Timeline: Recommendations and draft language prepared for the 2009 legislative session.

**4. Evaluate and identify gaps in Maine's downtown redevelopment programs:** The Council recommends evaluation of programs and service delivery for downtown revitalization, and creation of options to support communities of all sizes and needs.

Lead: Jody Harris, SPO

Tasks and Timeline: Recommendations and draft language prepared for the 2009 legislative session.

**5. Regional conservation best practices:** The Council recommends study of current regional conservation initiatives and publication of best practices, to be encouraged through regional asset-based strategies and implementation.

Lead: Tim Glidden, SPO

Tasks and Timeline: Publish report by December, 2008.

**6. LURC statute:** The Council recommends reassessment of the several subdivisions exemptions in the LURC statute that have encouraged dispersed development in the UT, and that SPO and LURC work with interested parties to find creative means to address these; and review of LURC's statute and staff resources to assure its ability to respond to increasing development pressures and their complexity.<sup>13</sup>

Lead: Sue Inches, SPO

Tasks and Timeline: Report findings and recommendations to the Governor's Office by November, 2008.

**7. Statewide trail network:** The Council recommends that the MaineDOT, in coordination with DOC and local and regional trail groups, identify and plan a statewide network of multi-use trails.

Lead: Sue Inches, SPO

Tasks and Timeline: Plan with recommendations by January, 2009.

**8. Model form-based zoning ordinance:** The Council urges the development a model "form-based" zoning code that municipalities may adopt to support mixed-use development in downtowns and built up areas.

Lead: Stacy Benjamin, SPO

Tasks and Timeline: A primer on "form-based" codes will be prepared and made available to towns by November 2008.

**9. Transportation Funding:** The Council urges relieving reliance on expensive infrastructure through more effective transportation planning and related land use.

Lead: Sue Inches, SPO

Tasks and Timeline: MaineDOT and SPO are now examining ways to incorporate Quality of Place planning and implementation into multi-modal corridor management planning and will develop recommendations by December 2008.

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<sup>13</sup> Since the release of the Council's first report in December 2007, LURC staff have provided updated data. This indicates that 8800 new dwellings have been permitted in the UT, 72 percent of which were on lots not reviewed under the Commission's subdivision review process because of the so-called "2 in 5" provision and other exemptions in the statute.

# **Appendix A: A Maine Quality of Place Investment Strategy: Using Quality of Place to Drive Job Growth**

A recommendation from the Governor's Council on Maine's Quality of Place, for consideration as legislation or executive order:

## **I. Preamble:**

Whereas, Maine is rich in resources and potential for economic growth based on the state's unique character and Quality of Place; and

Whereas, entrepreneurs, employers, and skilled workers in today's high-growth industries especially value Quality of Place, making it a critical driver of future economic growth and prosperity; and

Whereas, Maine's place-based assets, both natural and built, are diverse and plentiful, yet are today at risk from sprawling development and the lack of investment in downtowns and historic assets, the selling off of industrial forest ownership to new investor groups with diverse interests, and the loss of agricultural land and access to working waterfronts and outdoor recreational opportunities; and

Whereas, Quality of Place is a compelling framework for local and regional economic and community development, and a needed complement to traditional development strategies and programs designed to expand the workforce and create new high-value jobs; and

Whereas, Maine has underway a variety of promising, Quality of Place investment initiatives in the creative economy, nature- and heritage-based tourism, land conservation, and transportation planning; still, Maine government is not now organized and financed to carry out these and other Quality of Place investment efforts; and

Whereas, the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate have enacted the Northern Border Regional Commission, patterned after the Appalachian Regional Commission, which promises to bring substantial federal assistance to Maine in support of place-based investment strategies and initiatives.

Now, therefore, it shall be the policy of the State of Maine to pursue a Quality of Place Investment Strategy as a complement to its traditional economic and community development programs, as follows:

## **II. Definition:**

A "Quality of Place Investment Strategy" is one that builds upon exceptional and marketable, local and regional strengths, resources, and opportunities, to create new high-value jobs, products, and services. In practice, Quality of Place investment is market-based, locally-driven, regionally-organized, strategic from both a regional and statewide perspective, involves broad cross-sections of people in decision-making, and engages the private, public, and nonprofit sectors in its planning, financing, and implementation. At a minimum, it includes the five, sequential steps of: 1) asset-mapping, 2) strategic planning, 3) education and training, 4) financing, and 5) marketing.

## **III. Goals:**

The goals of this strategy shall be to:

1. Protect, strengthen, and develop Maine's Quality of Place assets, both natural and built;
2. Make the State's several regions more economically competitive and prosperous through increased investment, job opportunities, regional incomes, and public revenues; and
3. Create new jobs and valued products and services in Maine that will succeed in national and global markets for local, regional, and state benefit.

#### **IV. Maine Quality of Place Council:**

There is established a Maine Quality of Place Council to provide overall direction to and support for this strategy.

- 1. Composition:** The Council will comprise eleven members, including five (5) private citizens, five (5) state executives, and one (1) representative of regional councils of government that are designated as federal economic development districts, all of whom will be appointed by the Governor :
  - A. The five (5) private citizens will be selected for their knowledge of and commitment to protecting, enhancing, and building upon the State's natural, historic, cultural, recreational and downtown assets;
  - B. The five (5) state executives will represent related state interests, including economic and community development, transportation, conservation, state planning, and cultural interests;
  - C. The one (1) representative of the state's regional councils of government that are designated as federal economic development districts;
  - D. Citizen members will serve without compensation for three-year, staggered terms to assure continuity.
  - E. The chair of the Council shall be appointed by and serve at the pleasure of the Governor. The chair shall call meetings of the Council as needed, but no less than three times annually, and shall establish their agendas.
- 2. Duties:** The duties of the Council shall be to:
  - A. Identify opportunities for improved coordination among all related state executive agencies in regard to their missions, policies, plans, programs, funding practices, activities, and, where applicable, regulations;
  - B. Establish standards for regional Quality of Place investment plans and strategies, and review and approve them;
  - C. Award planning and implementation grants to the state's regional councils of government/federal economic development districts;
  - D. Establish standards and award planning and implementation grants for broad Quality of Place investment projects of statewide significance;
  - E. Develop, apply, and report quantifiable measures assessing progress toward meeting the goals of the Maine Quality of Place investment strategy; and
  - F. Consult and coordinate with the Governor's Council on Competitiveness and the Economy, the Maine Economic Growth Council, Community Preservation Advisory Committee, and Intergovernmental Advisory Commission.
- 3. Staffing and guidelines:** The State Planning Office shall provide staff support to the Council. At the direction of the Council, the State Planning Office shall prepare and publish guidelines for creating regional Quality of Place investment strategies to preserve, strengthen, and market Maine's place-based assets, both natural and built. These guidelines will present means to:
  - A. Develop the region's place-based assets and identify new and creative ways to generate new jobs, income, investments, and revenues from them;



- B. Create regional inventories of cultural, natural, structural, and leadership resources, for use in developing strategies to increase their economic and social value to communities and regions;
- C. Identify best practices for carrying out regional Quality of Place investment strategies; and
- D. Identify performance standards to measure and evaluate the progress of such regional investment strategies' toward meeting the Maine Quality of Place goals.

**4. Reporting:** The Council shall report regularly to the Governor, but not less than annually on November 15 of each year.

## **V. State Government Support of Maine's Quality of Place Assets:**

The commissioners of Conservation, Economic and Community Development, and Transportation, and the director of the State Planning Office shall lead an effort by the executive agencies of state government to provide a continuing and sustainable framework to advance regional Quality of Place investment strategies.

At their direction, the commissioners and heads of all executive agencies of state government shall:

- 1. Review their missions to identify where they do not actively protect, strengthen, and support efforts to build upon Maine's Quality of Place assets;
- 2. Examine their statutes, missions, policies, programs, funding practices, and activities; and make appropriate administrative changes and/or propose statutory changes needed to support statewide and regional Quality of Place investment strategies;
- 3. Concentrate public resources to support regional Quality of Place implementation initiatives with priority given to those that have potential for significant future economic growth, and where the expected long-term return on public investment will be greatest;
- 4. Revise grant program requirements to reward regional Quality of Place investment strategies by providing set-asides or establishing preferences for them;
- 5. Review regulatory practices to identify where they compromise or run counter to advancing the Maine Quality of Place Investment Strategy and its goals; and
- 6. Identify opportunities for leveraging federal and state agency partnerships and resources toward these ends.

MaineHousing, the Finance Authority of Maine, the University of Maine System, and the Maine Community College System are invited to join in this important effort, to examine their own missions, policies, plans, programs, and funding practices, and to identify where and how they may best advance the Maine Quality of Place Investment Strategy, and to report as described below.

The State Planning Office shall develop guidelines to assist agencies in examining the impact of their mission, policies, plans, statutes, programs, funding practices, and regulations on Maine's Quality of Place efforts and related regional investment strategies.

By February 1, 2009, the lead executives specified above shall report to the Maine Quality of Place Council and to the Governor with a comprehensive, state government-wide blueprint for implementing this investment strategy, complete with specific task and responsibility assignments, timelines, and benchmarks to measure the progress of each state agency toward aligning its mission, policies, plans, programs, funding practices, and activities with this strategy. Thereafter, the Council shall monitor progress toward achieving the blueprint and report annually to the Governor on the agencies' progress toward this end.

## **VI. Regional Focus:**

The State Planning Office shall convene regional government and economic leaders to promote the Maine Quality of Place Investment Strategy, as follows:

1. The Office shall convene representatives of the six regional councils of government designated as federal economic development districts, namely, the Androscoggin Valley Council of Governments, Midcoast Economic Development District, Kennebec Valley Council of Governments, Northern Maine Development Corporation, Eastern Maine Development Corporation, and Southern Maine Economic Development District.
2. At the direction of the Maine Quality of Place Council, the State Planning Office shall assist and enable the COG/EDDs to plan and implement regional Quality of Place investment strategies, and help determine how each COG/EDD will:
  - A. Create and staff at least one regional Quality of Place Council within the geographic region covered by each COG/EDD, as follows:
    - 1) Each regional Quality of Place Council shall comprise public officials, community and non-profit leaders, and stakeholders engaged with local and regional business, tourism, and downtown development, with a special effort to include those knowledgeable about the main, marketable quality of place assets within the region including but not limited to natural resources and the landscape, historical and cultural assets, intellectual and educational assets, and transportation and recreational assets.
    - 2) Each regional Quality of Place Council shall:
      - a) Map and inventory significant, marketable regional assets;
      - b) Develop regional place-based investment plans that conform to state standards and overall regional development plans;
      - c) Establish strategic priorities among potential regional investments and initiatives; and
      - d) Evaluate and recommend proposals for implementation project grants, using criteria developed by the Maine Quality of Place Council.
    - 3) COG/EDDs may establish a joint regional council where the relevant geographic area and assets lie within the jurisdiction of more than one COG/EDD; they may also establish councils for sub-regions within their coverage areas where such sub-regions are appropriate to address particular or unique market-based opportunities, the advancement of which is consistent with overall regional development strategies.
  - B. Administer State Quality of Place planning and implementation grant funds, including contract administration;
  - C. Leverage federal, private, and philanthropic funding to advance the Maine Quality of Place Investment Strategy and their regional counterparts;
  - D. Provide technical assistance to regional nonprofit organizations seeking to develop funding proposals for Quality of Place investment initiatives; and
  - E. Coordinate with neighboring COG/EDDs on Quality of Place plans and projects that cross regional boundaries.

## **VII. Funding**

Funding for regional Quality of Place investment strategy planning and implementation shall come from reconfiguring and reallocating existing state and federal resources, from private and philanthropic sources, and from such other funding sources as may be approved by the Legislature.

## Appendix B: Summary of the Council's First Report

In its first report to the Governor, the Council confirmed the Brookings assertion that Maine's Quality of Place is an economic driver of real and increasing value; and that it is at peril today from a variety of sources. To strengthen and build greater prosperity upon this outstanding, competitive asset, the Council offered fifteen recommendations in the areas of regional landscape conservation, community and downtown revitalization, and "asset-based" development. It also cited several "matters of concern," requiring attention at this time.

### **Regional Landscape Conservation**

- Secure adequate and continuing funding for the Land for Maine's Future Program
- Support private landowners' crucial role in protecting Maine's Quality of Place
- Recognize, incentivize, and reward regional landscape conservation
- Recognize and act upon the historic changes faced by the Land Use Regulation Commission
- Align the State's basic land use statutes with Quality of Place principles and investment goals

### **Community & Downtown Revitalization**

- Adopt a strong state community preservation and development policy
- Provide communities with more effective development assistance
- Enhance historic preservation tools
- Enact the Maine Community Preservation Act
- Create the Maine Intrastate Trail Network

### **Asset-Based Development Strategy**

- Use a locally-driven, broadly participatory structure to identify key assets and design and implement strategies to preserve and promote these assets
- Establish a state grant program to assist with the preparation of regional asset-based development strategies
- Establish a permanent state-level Maine Quality of Place Council
- Provide funding to implement regional and statewide asset-based development strategies
- Organize state programs and agencies to support proposed asset-based development efforts
- Align Maine's workforce development system and programs with Quality of Place job opportunities

### **Concerns**

- The increasing loss of public access to private lands
- The need to relieve reliance on expensive infrastructure through more effective transportation planning and related land use
- The need for educational and training programs to assure good design on the landscape and in the built environment
- The need for careful goals, standards, and performance measures for the proposed asset-based development strategy

The full text of the Council's findings, recommendations, and concerns may be found in People, Place, and Prosperity: 1st Report of the Governor's Council on Maine's Quality of Place, December 4, 2007, at [www.maine.gov/spo/qualityofplace](http://www.maine.gov/spo/qualityofplace)